

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, February 20, 2014

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Vicious assault on mother and daughter

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Armed robbers strike at off-licence

RAIDERS armed with a gun threatened staff during a robbery at an off-licence.

Two robbers burst into Booze Corner, in Howley Grange Road, in Halesowen, and threatened a female shop assistant.

They then stole an unknown amount of cash before fleeing in a distinctive turquoise coloured Land Rover.

Witnesses

West Midlands Police has issued CCTV footage of the suspects, as they launched an appeal for any witnesses to come forward. The raid happened on Tuesday afternoon.

The two men were white with one aged in his forties and wearing large glasses and a woolly hat. The other was in his 20s and wearing a black top with a GioGio logo on it in bright green. He also wore dark jeans with a bright blue 'Evisu' logo on the pockets.

Detective Constable Lisa Shepherd, from Force CID, said: "Investigations are ongoing but we are appealing for anyone who was in the area at the time of the robbery or anyone who saw the vehicle leave to contact us on 101."

Police were called to the scene at around 2.20pm.

No staff members were injured during the raid.

Housing OK in nature area

AN EDUCATION centre, nature wardens' base and five four-bedroom houses are to be built on land with in a nature reserve.

The development will be built at Saltwells Wood, Brierley Hill, on the site of Saltwells House, which has been demolished.

Dudley Council's development control committee unanimously approved the scheme at a meeting on Monday but some councillors were concerned over how the Selbourne Homes development and wardens base would co-exist.

WASTE PLANT GOES TO APPEAL

A COMPANY behind a controversial waste recycling plant has accused planning watchdogs of 'ignoring' evidence when rejecting its proposals.

Clean Power's proposal for the waste plant on disused land owned by Network Rail off Moor Street was turned down by a planning committee of Dudley Council last year.

In making their decision, councillors said there was a 'likelihood' residents living within 70 ft of the site could be adversely impacted by its odour.

But this week, as the company lodges an appeal against the decision, Iceni Projects Limited — writing on behalf of Clean Power — has claimed key supporting evidence for the application was not considered.

Ignored

In a case document for the appeal, a spokesman said: "It is the appellants' case that the local planning authority has not used the evidence presented in the environmental statement and that the local planning authority ignored the recommendation of the Environment Agency."

He added: "The Environment Agency provided the local planning authority with a high level of confidences that the odour control measures incorporated within the appeal scheme are of a very high quality and that, with that quality of odour abatement included, the proposal could achieve an environmental permit."

The Environment Agency did not object to the planning application after stringent conditions laid down on plant operations.

But more than 350 people signed a petition against the plant.

Report by
Alex Ross

They raised concerns that the plant would blight the landscape, lead to more traffic and emit smells.

Last week ward councillors and residents met to discuss reviving their campaign against the plant.

Councillor Rachel Harris said: "People around here don't want a big waste recycling operation near their homes."

"This is a built up residential area and is simply not the place."

"We've spoken to people since the appeal has gone in, they are angry the company has done this but many are not surprised."

"We will be contacting residents soon on how they can get involved."

Clean Power said the six-acre plant, which would create 30 jobs, would release low carbon dioxide emissions and no unpleasant odour.

Domestic and commercial waste would be brought on lorries and turned into gas for combustion creating energy and heat.

It was claimed it would generate electricity for up to 10,000 homes a year.

The appeal will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate.

If the company win, the council could be forced to pay legal costs.

New boss for campaign to save theatre



From left, chairman Gordon Downing with supporters Martin Whitehead and Garry Sawers

HE is to spearhead the campaign to save a historic theatre from demolition. Gordon Downing has taken over as chairman of the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome following the death of its leader Geoff Fitzpatrick.

The former Halesowen College lecturer died last month, aged 72, following a short illness. Mr Fitzpatrick helped establish the group with the organisation's founder Malcolm Palmer in 2011.

Mr Downing has led the group during Mr Fitzpatrick's illness and has now taken the position full time.

He became involved with the bid to save the building after being struck by its history and the campaigners' passion when visiting an exhibition at the Station Hotel. The retired teacher, 77, of Dibdale Road, Dudley, said he hopes the campaign can gain ground in the coming months.

Campaigners got a boost when Midlands-based entertainment company Events that Rock confirmed it had held talks with Dudley Council about taking over the Castle Hill venue. They also marked the theatre's 75th anniversary with hope that the building which once hosted George Formby, Laurel and Hardy, and Judy Garland, could be reopened.

"I'm going to try and build on what Geoff built up," said Mr Downing. "We want to have more talks."

A decision on the Hippodrome is expected when Dudley Council's planning committee hears applications for demolishing the building.

£1.5m to convert ex-store into gym

A £1.5 million plan to convert a former convenience store in Quinton into a fitness centre, creating 24 jobs, has been lodged with Dudley Council.

Surrey-based Competition Line UK Ltd has submitted proposals for the old Co-operative store in Hagley Road West, which has been empty for four years.

The building would be converted to create an open-plan gymnasium, a ladies-only gymnasium and a spinning studio as well as changing rooms.

There would also be saunas, steam rooms and a disabled wet room as well as space for dance and aerobics classes.

The car park would provide 67 spaces and racks for 16 bicycles.

The business would create 12 full-time and 12 part-time jobs.

A planning application has been submitted for a change of use of the premises.

The firm runs the gyms under the brand name of Lifestyle Fitness. It has around 50 premises across the country including sites in Quarry Bank, Stourport, Stoke and Tamworth.

The application has won the backing of a planning officer but one nearby resident objected over concern about noise from cars and music at the gym.

Fire station name chosen

FORMER council headquarters demolished to make way for a £3 million fire station will be honoured at the site, say fire chiefs, although none of the old bricks will be used nor the name reflect its previous use.

The new fire station on the site of the Rowley Regis and Warley council municipal buildings in Old Hill will serve both Halesowen and Cradley Heath.

The building, next to Haden Hill Leisure Centre, will be named Haden Cross Community Fire Station.



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Council house protest over centres

CAMPAIGNERS battling cost-cutting changes at children's centres took their fight to the steps of Dudley Council House for a protest ahead of a key budget meeting.

The group of worried parents and members of Dudley Coalition Against the Cuts waved banners and chanted during the hour-long demonstration on February 11. Snow failed to dampen their spirits. Protestors said they believed

changes planned for the centres, including the loss of staff, would have a 'severe impact' on the early education of their youngsters and take away vital support.

Council bosses originally planned to close some of the centres in order to cut costs but reconsidered after an outcry from residents. Although the authority currently plans to keep centres open, they have indicated that jobs will be axed.

There are also plans to place the centres in five clusters around the borough with facilities used by GP surgeries and other NHS services. But campaigners say they want the centres to continue operating as they do now.

Officials said the £2.3 million cut originally planned to the children's centres had been reduced to £1.5 million.

Sarah Shotton, of Haydon Road,

Pensnett, organised the protest outside the council house last week. Her daughter Misha attends the Bromley Pensnett centre and she said the staff were 'extraordinary'.

"We are concerned making changes to these centres and the loss of staff will mean the services are not there as much when the children need them and this simply cannot be allowed to happen," she said.

HMRC to close tax offices as costs cut

TAX offices in Brierley Hill, Wolverhampton and Walsall will close as part of £27 million Government savings.

HM Revenue and Customs has announced it is closing all 281 of its walk-in centres across the country, putting 1,300 jobs at risk. The centres gave face-to-face help to 2.5 million people with tax queries in 2012.

But HMRC will now replace them with a telephone service and home visits in a bid to cut costs, with the centres due to shut in May.

Defended

Union bosses said the move made 'no economic sense'.

Centres are based in Waterfront Way, Brierley Hill; Crown House, Birch Street, Wolverhampton; and Patisson House, Midland Road, in Walsall.

HMRC bosses defended the closures and insisted its new service, being introduced after a trial in the North East, would be more convenient. Ruth Owen, director general for personal tax, said: "HMRC is dedicated to providing help to customers when they need it. The pilot showed that this is a valuable service."

£1 tickets for children

CHILDREN can travel across the West Midlands for just £1 per day with their grandparents this month.

The 'kids for a quid' ticket has been introduced by National Express West Midlands during half-term.

The ticket can be bought from the driver and gives anyone under 16, travelling with an OAP concessionary pass holder, a day's unlimited travel for £1. The offer is valid after 9.30am every day until Sunday and also get holders two-for-one tickets at attractions such as Dudley Zoo, Black Country Living Museum and the Seafire Centre.

Family business

A JEWELLERS marking 125 years in business has been congratulated by Dudley South MP Chris Kelly.

TH Baker was started by Thomas Baker in Brierley Hill in 1888, now includes 11 stores and is run by his great-great-grandsons Philip and Andrew Higgins.

Assailants thought victim was drug dealer

TWO men who beat up a man they suspected of dealing drugs have been spared jail.

Paul Gardner, 46, and his 27-year-old stepson Anthony Bennington struck as the victim walked down Penicrest Lane, Rowley Regis.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that the victim was attacked from behind and knocked to the ground where he was punched and kicked on May 11.

MP focus on mental health needs

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched by an MP to find out if mental health patients' needs are being addressed.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris, who leads the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Mental Health, is asking people to share with him their experiences of mental health care. He is also talking to ministers, doctors and health chiefs as part of the inquiry.

Mr Morris said: "The Government's new Health and Social Care Act commits the NHS to giving mental health parity of esteem with physical health but it is vital that we make sure that that commitment goes beyond words on a piece of paper and actually makes a real difference.

"A third of avoidable deaths in England every year are people with mental health problems and we all have to recognise that there really is no health without mental health. I hope that anybody who has experience of mental health care will come forward and tell the inquiry how they think things could be improved."

Mr Geoffrey Dann, prosecuting, said that Gardner alleged that his daughter had been offered drugs by the victim.

The father-of-six said some of his children had found hypodermic needles that he suggested had been dumped by the man. He reported the matter to Sandwell Council on three separate occasions and also informed the police but no action had been taken, it was alleged.

The victim denied taking or selling drugs. He told the court: "I was on the floor bleeding after being hit on the head by a metal bar and was being kicked." He received hairline fractures to four ribs and had a head wound that needed to be stapled.

Miss Wendy Miller, defending, said Gardner was concerned for his daughter and the incident escalated out of control.

Gardner from Winchester Road, Rowley Regis admitted causing actual bodily harm.

Bennington from Mount Road, Rowley Regis had earlier been found guilty of assault by a jury after denying the offence.

Gardner was given an eight month jail term suspended for 18 months with 200 hours unpaid work and a three month night time curfew. Bennington received a 12 month jail sentence suspended for 18 months with unpaid work and curfew.

Eye in sky artwork lands prize



Robert Perry used a night-time aerial image of Birmingham city centre as inspiration

IT is the eye in the Midlands sky which usually helps to catch criminals and give an overview of major incidents. But now the stunning views photographed from the West Midlands Police helicopter have helped an artist to land a prestigious prize.

Stourbridge-based artist Robert Perry specialises in capturing cityscapes on canvas. He struck upon his latest idea after spotting a feature in The Chronicle's sister newspaper the Express & Star showcasing

breathtaking photographs of the Midlands lit up at night taken from the police helicopter.

The 69-year-old former teacher contacted the police who supplied him with bird's eye images. This 6ft by 4ft oil-based work took five days to complete in the studio. It shows a stunning view of Birmingham city centre and won Mr Perry first prize in the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' competition.

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Backing for new council housing

PLANS to spend £206 million improving thousands of council homes in Dudley over the next five years have been approved.

Members of the Dudley Council's cabinet also agreed to increase rents for tenants by 1.5 per cent. It works out as an average of £1.22 a week from April. The rise is lower than last year's 4.6 per cent increase.

Reduce

Council bosses said they wanted to keep it small to reduce the pressure on cash-strapped families.

They also approved increases to a number of other charges in line with the rent increase, which include garage rents and service charges for supported accommodation.

All of the rises will come into effect from April 2014.

Cabinet member for housing Councillor Steve Waltho said the rent rise had been kept low as the council no longer had to follow a Government formula.

As part of the improvement plan, £13.4m will be spent building more than 100 new council homes in the borough. Councillor Waltho told the meeting: "We are looking to provide more affordable housing."

Car parking fee hike fear

CASH-STRAPPED Dudley Council is looking at increasing car park charges across the borough to bring in £225,000 over the next three years.

But opposition leader Councillor Patrick Harley warned the Labour-led authority against using motorists to bring in more cash.

He said: "At a time when the economy is rapidly improving, this is not the time to choke off the High Street recovery in Dudley with sky high car parking charges."

It comes as the council plans to spend £300,000 replacing 52 outdated pay and display car park machines.

Death inquiry

An inquiry into the death of a man who took a cocktail of drugs has been adjourned. Darren Wooldridge, 43, of Spring Meadow Road, Dudley, died at Russells Hall Hospital on April 2. His family asked for evidence from mental health service.

Wages £20,000 a year short of house prices

PEOPLE on average wages in some parts of the West Midlands would need to earn more than £20,000 extra a year to keep up with soaring house prices.

New research by the housing charity Shelter reveals that wage increases have fallen dramatically behind rising house prices over the past 16 years.

A single person in the Black Country would need on average a salary of £37,399 to afford the same house they could have bought in the 1990s on the equivalent wages of the time.

A worker in the Black Country would need to earn a further £15,389 on top of the

average £22,010 a year salary just to keep up with the increase in house prices.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "I helped get funds for new homes that have been built on Priory Road, the Wrens Nest and in Gornal, but that's still not enough for huge demand. The Government needs to step in and commit to building more houses."

Derelict

"I want the Government to make an ambitious commitment to building 200,000 new homes and I want as many as possible of those to replace derelict land in Dudley."

Natasha Millward, Labour's candidate

for Dudley South said: "The Help to Buy Scheme pumps up demand but does nothing to increase housing supply. As a result house prices rocket sky high, and people get shunted into the private rental sector. In turn, increased demand for rented homes, triggers higher rents."

Campbell Robb, chief executive of Shelter, said: "When you need to more than double your salary just to keep up with rising house prices, it is no surprise that the dream of a home of their own is slipping further out of reach for a generation."

"Politicians need to start meeting people halfway by committing to bold solutions

that will get more affordable homes built. Otherwise future generations will find themselves priced out of a stable home, however hard they work or save."

"The reality is that successive governments have failed to build the affordable homes that this country needs. As a result our housing shortage has reached crisis point."

"Pumping money into mortgage guarantee schemes is not the solution. This further inflates prices by increasing demand for an already limited number of homes, and will only make things worse. The only solution is to build more affordable homes."

Thug attacks mother and daughter with bottle

BEAUTICIAN Nicole Hill has been left scarred for life and is too scared to go out after being attacked with a glass bottle by a clubber – just because she spurned his advances.

Left with a four-inch cut to the back of her head, the 20-year-old has today spoken of how she was worried for her life during the brutal attack.

Terrified Nicole is scared to go out while her attacker is still at large.

Nicole had been out with her mother Lorraine, aged 47, and two of her friends at Benjamins in Halesowen when the assault took place.

Hit

She said: "We were on the dance floor and a man kept backing into me."

"I made it clear to him that he should leave me alone – then I looked round at him again and he was holding a glass bottle upside down in his hand as if to say 'come on then'."

"My mother got in between us to say 'go away' to him – but then he hit my mother and, as she fell, she pulled me down with her."

"I can't remember what exactly happened next, but by our cuts we think he smashed the bottle against the back of our heads while we were on the floor."

"The next thing I knew, he was gone."

She added: "I was really scary – I remember thinking this is serious, something bad could happen here, much worse than the cuts to our heads. I was worried for our lives."

The mother and daughter, who live in Halesowen, were taken to Russells Hall Hospital following the attack in the early hours of November 16.

Nicole, who works at Imagine Spa at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill, had seven stitches to the cut on her head. Her mother needed a gash on her head sealed with glue and stitches for a cut on an eyebrow.

Nicole, who had to take three weeks off work, said: "I wear my hair up at work and I can feel the bald patch around the scar – I don't think hair will ever grow back there, it's terrible."

She added: "This man needs to be a bigger person and admit to what he has done



At home, Nicole Hill, and her mother Lorraine Hill, both of Halesowen



Police issued this image of a man they want to question

and clear his conscious, who says he won't do something like this again."

She has hit out at the nightclub. She said: "I was a bit appalled at Benjamins because they never stopped the music."

"We know the DJ and after he said he didn't even know the attack had taken place. They never turned the lights up or anything."

John Marshall, owner of the venue in Birmingham Street, said: "I am sorry they feel lapsed on the floor."

"We were both on the dancefloor and I saw him pick up a bottle," she said.

"I remember holding Nic's arm and pulling her down and I think that's when he attacked us."

"He hit the bottle over my head and I col-

In December a 26-year-old local man was arrested, but was subsequently released without charge.

Detective Constable Dave Hackett, from West Midlands Police, said: "I am convinced that someone would have seen the incident and remembered this unprovoked attack on the dance floor of a busy club."

"I would also appeal to the friends of the attacker, whom I believe were present, and will have key information which can assist our investigation."

"This attack has been a life changing event for the mum and her daughter and I would urge anyone who can help to contact us immediately."

NEWS in brief

Childminding help is required

A RECRUITMENT campaign has been launched to find new childminders.

Dudley Council says there is a shortage of people taking up the vital caring roles.

The authority is looking for residents interested in providing a quality childminding service to contact them. Running a childminding service requires the individual to be self-employed, complete background checks and meet minimum legal standards. The council offers training. Contact 01384 818121.

Croc shock as roof damaged

THE reptile house at Dudley Zoo was damaged by high winds. A panel above the crocodile vivarium came loose and keepers had to secure it.

It left a female West African dwarf crocodile, named Janet, exposed to the night sky.

Zoo spokeswoman Jill Hitchman said: "There was absolutely no risk of Janet escaping as she is within a secure enclosure inside the building, and spot heaters in the vivarium ensured there was no problem with temperatures falling."

Some fins a bit different in pool

PEOPLE can get fit at a swimming class with a difference at Halesowen Leisure Centre.

People can try swimming with fins and hand paddles at half-hour sessions each Tuesday at 6.30pm, to maximise water resistance to boost muscles. The class costs £4.70 and will be followed by a public swim. Bring your own fins and hand paddles.

Training to get industrial work

A COLLEGE is hoping to help boost manufacturing industry with a special training programme. City of Wolverhampton College launched its Preparing to Work in the Engineering and Manufacturing Industry course in response to a revival in the sector. Jobless people should ask at the Jobcentre for a referral or contact 01902 837198.

Gift of gospel

A GOSPEL service is being held at Cradley Heath Baptist Church. The free event on Saturday at 7pm at the CornGreaves Road venue, put on by The Black Country Mission, will also have free gifts for children.

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NEWS

**THE BEST
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RHODES**

IN A reckless moment I suggested the floods might spell the end of HS2. A few hours after that column appeared, a BBC report suggested the need to repair existing lines might put the future of the high-speed railway in doubt. And you can bet your life Auntie Beeb would not suggest such a thing unless she has been talking to someone important.

□□□□□

IF THE FLOODS DO LEAD TO HS2 BEING CANCELLED, IT WILL BE THE CLOSEST THING TO DIVINE INTERVENTION THIS CHEERLESSLY GODLESS NATION OF OURS IS EVER LIKELY TO SEE. GET READY WITH THOSE HALLELUJAHHS.

□□□□□

IN THE MEANTIME, IS IT TOO MUCH TO ASK THAT EVERY POLITICIAN VISITING THE FLOODED AREAS MIGHT AT LEAST TAKE A STIRRUP PUMP OR A COUPLE OF BUCKETS?

□□□□□

I LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY TIMES BARCLAYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE ANTONY JENKINS USED HIS BANK'S LATEST BUZZWORD ON HIS RADIO 4 INTERVIEW. BARCLAYS PROBABLY PAID THE EARTH FOR SOME CITY PR COMPANY TO DREAM UP THIS MOST VACUOUS OF SLOGANS AND THE INTENSELY IRRITATING MR JENKINS WAS CLEARLY GETTING HIS MONEY'S WORTH. TIME AFTER TIME HE STRESSED THAT BARCLAYS WAS BECOMING "THE GO-TO BANK." IT IS AT MOMENTS LIKE THIS THAT YOU WISH RADIO WERE A TWO-WAY PROCESS AND YOU COULD SAY TO MR JENKINS: "THE VERY NEXT TIME YOU INSULT MY INTELLIGENCE WITH 'THE GO-TO BANK,' I WILL REACH THROUGH THE LOUDSPEAKER AND SLAP YOUR LEGS VERY HARD." JENKINS RATTLED ON: THE GO-TO BANK, THE GO-TO BANK, THE GO-TO BANK. GOT IT? LATER THAT DAY BARCLAYS ANNOUNCED THAT, WHILE THE MILLIONAIRE BOSSSES WERE GETTING ENORMOUS BONUSES, THE BANK WAS MAKING 12,000 MINIONS REDUNDANT. BARCLAYS – THE GO-TO THE JOBCENTRE BANK.

□□□□□

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Smoke-free bid for hospital environment

HOSPITALS could become smoke-free as part of sweeping changes aimed at improving the health of residents.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust has made the proposal as part of its public health plan for 2014 to 2017, with a commitment to ensuring patients and staff no longer smoke in the region's hospital grounds by 2018.

Other proposals being put forward in relation to Sandwell, City and Rowley Regis hospitals include the ambition to offer every pregnant woman carbon monoxide monitoring and if required, intensive help to stop smoking.

Nicotine replacement therapy could also be offered to staff and patients to help them kick the habit.

Bosses say they hope the move will mean the hospitals no longer play a passive role by only helping people once they fall ill and instead will try and actively improve people's health.

On average, the trust sees each person within the area it covers three times a year and helps with a variety of different ailments and the new plans are aimed at reducing visits.

As one of the area's biggest employers, with around 7,000 staff, trust chiefs say one key aim is to make sure its staff are healthy. Bosses have set themselves

13 objectives to achieve in its public health plan, some of which are dependent on other organisations' success to be able to deliver.

It is hoping to cut alcohol-related admissions by at least a fifth and increase referrals by 50 per cent from the trust to partner alcohol support agencies by the end of 2015.

The trust will meanwhile make sure the food it serves at its sites is healthy, the portions are appropriate and it is consistent with nutritional advice.

To look after staff, all new employees joining the trust will be asked to provide health data about themselves and will be offered support to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

There will meanwhile be gym facilities at the Sandwell site and healthy food options for out-of-hours night workers.

by Alex Homer

Pupils show their support



Demi Leigh, 11, with fellow year 7 pupils at Perryfields

SCHOOL staff and pupils are raising money for a hospital unit where a popular teacher is receiving treatment. A non-uniform day, cake sale and a dancing fundraiser have all raised funds for the oncology department at City Hospital.

The efforts have been at Perryfields High School, Oldbury as pupils and staff have banded together to show support for 59-year-old Graham Newson, who has been teaching at the school for more than 10 years.

In total they have raised more than £200 since the start of the school year in September and aim to continue raising money throughout the rest of the year.

Mr Newson has been receiving treatment for cancer for around 18 months at the unit and has continued to teach when he is well enough.

Di Green, curriculum enhancement manager, said: "We are very proud of what the children have done to raise money for a cause so close to all our hearts."

Loan has growth at firm set in stone

A NATURAL stone supplier in Halesowen has expanded and bought a second trading premises, creating two new jobs, using £275,000 of funding support from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking.

Founded in 2008, Digby Trading sources and imports a range of natural stone products from India and China, which it sells to trade retailers for patio and garden design.

Yard

To create space to store its extensive stone products and accommodate expansion plans, the business, which already has an operation at Felixstowe Dock and Stourbridge, decided to buy an additional yard.

The company approached Lloyds Bank and secured the loan to fund the purchase of a 3.8 acre site in Halesowen.

Funding was granted using the Funding for Lending Scheme. As part of it, Lloyds Bank is offering discounts of one per cent to all small and medium-sized enterprises in all sectors for the life of their loan.

To help deliver increased workload in line with the business' acceleration, the company has taken on two new members of staff and plans to increase numbers further in coming months.

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Shock as mandies on fishing holiday

AN ANGLER from Brierley Hill died suddenly during a holiday in Goa, just days before he was due home for his daughter's 17th birthday.

Members of Paul Grazier's family this week paid tribute to the 44-year-old 'free-spirited' and hard-working carpenter, who lived with his mother in Larksfield Mews.

Police in northern Goa are investigating the cause of his death, although there are not thought to be any suspicious circumstances.

Friends

Mr Grazier, a regular visitor to the Indian state, used to leave his room at around 7am each day to go fishing with friends but failed to answer their knocks on his door at a guest house in Amjuna on February 12. They alerted police, who called firefighters, and they found him dead in bed after breaking down the door.

Mr Grazier had been due to return to celebrate the 17th birthday of his daughter, Georgia, yesterday.

His mother, Mrs Joan Grazier, 67, said: "He was a son you could rely on. Loving and kind. He was a lovable rogue and a good dad."

Mr Grazier's sister, Julie Cox, 46, of Claverley, said the family including Georgia and his ex-partner, Zoe Matthews, were 'devastated'.

by Tom Mason

Friends described 30-year-old James Palmer as 'high spirited' when he left the pub at around 10.45pm on the evening of September 6 last year after watching an England football match.

But at around 12.30am the following morning he was found hanging from the loft hatch by his mother in their home in The Lawley, Halesowen.

An inquest at Smethwick Council House heard that up until a few months before his death he had been working his dream job as a BT engineer but when his rolling contract wasn't renewed his friends and family noticed a change in him.

His mother Anne Palmer told the hearing: "He always came to me to talk about things but he didn't say a thing. It seemed like a normal night and he seemed to be in high spirits."

A toxicology report revealed that Mr Palmer had a high level of alcohol in his system.

Deputy Coroner for the Black Country, Angus Smillie said: "It is clear that this alcohol impaired his judgement and made him emotionally unstable."

Mr Smillie didn't feel he could rule it was suicide or an accident and instead recorded a narrative conclusion. He said: "James Robert Palmer hanged himself while his mind was disturbed by a large amount of alcohol."

When his contract ended with the company she noticed a change in him but didn't feel he was depressed.

His friend Lee Siviter also gave evidence. He said he

Man died when his mind was impaired by alcohol

A FORMER BT engineer was found hanging by his mother in their home months after he lost his dream job, an inquest heard.

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Little Foodies have a healthy appetite



Youngsters from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Dudley learn how to make pizzas

FROM making burritos to creating pizzas, schoolchildren have been busy during a week-long food celebration at Merry Hill.

The Little Foodies festival programme has been jam-packed full of activities to help encourage healthy eating habits.

Sessions have seen youngsters build their own vegetable burritos at Burrito Kitchen and designing healthy pizzas at Pizza Express.

They have also been packing their own lunchbox with Baguette & Co or making fruity smoothies at Zumo juice bar.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary in Dudley and Priory Primary in Sandwell were among the schools taking part.

The free workshops each lasted one hour and every child was able to take home a treat from Merry Hill as a reminder of their day.

The shopping centre is also running We Are Dining campaign until March 2 when shoppers will be able to try free samples.

NEWS in brief

Car slides off road down bank

A CAR slid off the road on a busy dual carriage-way near Halesowen and plunged down an embankment into a hedge.

The Nissan Micra left the roadway on the A456 Hagley Causeway at a roundabout on Saturday afternoon.

It is believed the car fell down a 6ft bank and then became wedged in a hedge.

Onlookers said the shaken male driver had been able to get out of the car as police arrived shortly after 3pm.

A man, who did not wish to be named, saw the aftermath of the accident and said: "The driver seemed a bit shaken but okay."

Run to fitness with Cobra club

A RUNNING and triathlon club has launched a new series of sessions for adults to get fit.

Cobra Running Club, based in Halesowen, is offering a free two weeks taster led by experienced club runners.

The free classes started yesterday followed by a further eight weeks aimed at getting people running five or six miles or more by week 10.

The course costs £10, which will be deducted from the membership fee, £30, if people decide to stay. Visit www.cobrarc.co.uk or call 07880 043 148.

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NEWS FEATURE**IN MY VIEW**WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

AS publicity stunts go, it is rather impressive. A 7ft by 12ft statue of a hedgehog has been installed in south London to promote David Attenborough's new TV series.

The life-like structure, placed in Clapham Common, took more than two months to create, and with 2,000 soft wood spikes, it is actually larger than a rhinoceros.

You hate to think what effect it will have on the drunks stumbling across it while taking the short-cut from the pub, especially when they try to explain the experience to their angry wives waiting at home.

"What? You've seen a 12ft hedgehog in the park? You'll be telling me next you're late because you bumped into George Michael."

NICK Clegg, don't you just love him? The esteemed Deputy Prime Minister's latest pearl of wisdom is that a fresh approach is needed with regard to drug-related crime, because the war on drugs is being lost.

And let's face it he's right. Anybody who thinks there is any chance of winning the battle against drugs needs only to take a trip to their local magistrates court for a reality check. Day in, day out, our courts are occupied by a non-stop procession of twitching, paranoid junkies shuffling their way into the courtrooms, chuntering obscenities to themselves as they fidget and fume in their seats.

But if we are going to be seriously honest about this, governments don't have a great track record when it comes to winning the war on many crimes.

Okay, Mr Clegg will no doubt point to the success Britain has in dealing with the serious stuff, you know, like not wearing a seatbelt or smoking in the pub. But when it comes to the more bread-and-butter offences, the perpetrators seem to have a woefully unhealthy disregard for authority.

For example, does Mr Clegg seriously think any government is going to truthfully be able to say it has "made burglary history"? Or that a future Liberal Democrat government would be able to "win the war on murder"?

The reality is that it is pretty well impossible to "win the war" on any major crime, surely that does not mean we should throw in the towel and accept defeat. Are we now to turn a blind eye to street robbery or tax evasion, simply because those who are criminally inclined demonstrate a reluctance to change their ways?

Still, it was good to see that the Deputy Prime Minister decided to make his announcement in Columbia. You can just imagine half the country's drug barons nodding sagely in agreement: "I agree with Nick."



3Mercian commanding officer Lt Col Chris Davies



First tour has been life-changing says Pte Plummer



Pte Ashley Plummer secures the base's front gate

THROUGH THE YEARS**1984**

A 60-year-old vicar born above a grocery shop in Wolverhampton presided over Elton John's wedding to Renata Blauel. Canon James Whild was the man to oversee the eccentric pop star's marriage to Renata Blauel in a ceremony in Sydney, Australia. Before emigrating in 1956, Mr Whild, who was born in Dudley Road, Wolverhampton, had been curate at St Luke's Church in Blakenhall.

WEST Midland transport chief Phil Bateman was attacked as he went to the aid of a man being beaten in a pub brawl. Councillor Bateman, chairman of West Midlands public transport committee, was punched, butted and showered with glass as beer mugs were hurled at him in the Turks Head in Lancaster Circus, Birmingham. He had sprung to the defence of a man who was attacked while phoning for help following an assault on a woman.

1994

A NAKED man brought a Wednesday keep-fit class to a standstill when he burst in and began performing obscene acts to the music in front of 60 shocked women. Some of the class at the leisure centre were upset, but others were unable to control their laughter. Police were unable to get a description of the man as few had been looking at his face.

THE wheels came off a day out for the Goodyear Pensioners' Club - literally. The coach carrying retired workers from the Wolverhampton tyre plant shed two of its wheels while travelling along the M6 in Warwickshire, just two hours after passing its MOT. The driver managed to steer the vehicle to the hard shoulder, and another coach picked the group up to take them to the Walt Disney ice show in London.

2004

THE price of a pint of beer around the West Midlands was going up by 10p, following a shock rise by the brewers of Carling, Worthington and Grolsch. Wolverhampton-based Banks's also increased the price of its beer by 3p a pint, blaming soaring production costs.

GLAMOUR model Jordan emerged from the I'm A Celebrity jungle, declaring she was totally besotted with fellow contestant Peter Andre. She said her feelings for former boyfriend Stuart were crushed the moment she met the Mysterious Girl singer, whose picture she had on her wall as a child.

DEPUTY Prime Minister John Prescott was in Wolverhampton to launch the city's flagship Market Square development.

Last hurrah for 3Mercian troops

Black Country and Staffs soldiers are ending their last tour in Afghanistan.
JOHN SCOTT reports

SOLDIERS from our region will march into the military history books with pride on their return from their last hurrah in Afghanistan, their Commanding Officer has promised.

The 3rd Battalion Mercian Regiment (3Mercian) – formerly the Staffords – will parade along streets where they have been granted the freedom of a town or city this summer after their current tour of duty on the frontline, which is the last before the battalion is disbanded as part of plans to cut the strength of the regular army.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Davies, the commander, promised: "We will go out with flags unfurled and drums beating as the last battalion of the Mercian Regiment ever to serve in Afghanistan. The deployment has gone better than we could have envisaged and leaves a lasting legacy that will sit proudly alongside the achievements of those who served before us in both this battalion and their predecessor The Staffords."

Sadness

But there is deep sadness over the loss of Sgt Major Ian Fisher. The former Staffordshire University student from Essex, a 42-year-old father-of-two, was killed in a suicide bomb attack. Lt Col Davies said: "This was a really massive blow for the battalion. Despite that they have done well and are in a good place.

"We have to go through the disbandment after our return but we understand the reasons for that and know the regular army has got to be reduced in size."

The companies involved – A and C –



From left: LCpl Matt Bradley, Pte Tom Wright, Pte Dean Williams and LCpl Matty Hill

have been operating from two of only four bases outside Camp Bastion currently used by British combat troops. A few years ago there were 137. The last act of both will be to close their respective base for good, Camp Price near Geresh and Lashkar Gah Durai in Nahr-e Saraj.

Lt Col Davies said: "Neither have any creature comforts left. It is now basic soldiering, living on the extremes but there is no requirement for them to be forward any more because the Afghan security forces have control."

Both are expected to be pulling back

to Camp Bastion in the near future with A Company, who are based at Lashkar Gah Durai and came out to Afghanistan first, leading the return home. All the 3Mercian troops will be back by summer.

As they ate at Camp Price, members of C Company each took away a brick along with their paper plate and plastic cutlery after every meal.

Lance Corporal Matty Hill, a 29-year-old father-of-three who lives with wife Emma in Gornal, is on his second tour of duty on the frontline in Helmand Province. He said: "Taking the brick

out every time we had a meal meant everyone did their fair share rather than leaving it to a few to do all the work. You don't really mind because every time something disappears it means we are closer to going home."

The proposed eight or nine-month deployment is now expected to barely last six in most cases.

Private Ashley Plummer, 22, whose parents live in Bilbrook, revealed: "This is my first tour and it has been life-changing. A geezer who looked 75 arrived at the gates wanting medical assistance after he and some younger lads had been wounded in fighting. He had been hit in the head with shrapnel. My grandfather is the same age."

The former lifeguard at Dudley Baths added: "It is an important tour because it is the last by 3Mercian and we will all finish it together."

Lance Corporal Matt Bradley, a 29-year-old father-of-three from Gornal who is engaged to partner Louise, is on his second Afghan tour. He is in the Quick Reaction Force, which rushes to help Afghan troops. He said: "Luckily we have not got in any scrapes. It is a lot quieter than last time. They have been totally different tours but both have been equally challenging."

Private Dean Williams, 24, from Upper Gornal, now hopes to join the Paras. He said: "It is sad that 3Mercian is disbanding after this. We have bonded as a group and got to know each other really well. Now we will be split up. I only joined this battalion because of its connection to The Staffords, which it replaced, but now that link with the local community could be lost."

The troops and their families will leave Germany and move to join either 1Mercian in Bulford or 2Mercian at Chester. There will be an emotional homecoming for 3Mercian when they exercise their right to march through places in the West Midlands where they have been granted the freedom to do so, for one last time. The battalion's colours will be laid up in Lichfield Cathedral beside those of the Staffordshire Regiment.

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LETTERS**OAPs deserve better than IDS plans**

IAN Duncan Smith has said that if the Conservatives get in in 2015 (they only got in last time with the help of the Lib Dems), he is going to stop pensioners' fuel allowance, bus passes and we will all have to pay for a television licence.

He also said that nothing will be ring-fenced anymore.

I hope, if this happens, it also applies to the millions of pounds that we send

It's time to stop the foreign aid

NIGEL Farage is quite right in calling for foreign aid to be diverted to help our own stricken countrymen and women.

Now MPs are belatedly echoing Mr Farage's plea.

Whenever a tragedy happens overseas the British public put their hands in their pockets, pull out their cheque books and give with generous hearts.

Our successive governments have happily put their hands in our pockets again and given British money to foreign regimes — and these are often corrupt foreign regimes.

Enough is enough.

Cut foreign aid and use the money to alleviate the suffering of our own folk.

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abroad in aid every year to countries that have more money than we do.

This pitiful excuse for a Government has already let the fuel companies exploit this country with sky-high bills, so that it is not only pensioners who can't afford to warm their homes but people with young families and one parent families as well.

Fuel bills are rising so we can't afford to eat but, if we could afford to eat, we can't get to the shops because IDS is going to stop our bus passes.

Not every pensioner can afford, or drive, a car.

Most pensioners can't afford a TV licence, so will not be able to watch TV.

If you are sick, because this pathetic Government has stopped bus passes you will not be able to get to hospital and, if you do manage to, because the Conservatives have decimated the NHS by cutting staff levels, you will probably have to wait hours to be seen and not get the treatment you require.

I and many like me (I am 75) have worked hard all our lives, brought our families up, never claimed benefits, always paid NI and taxes — and we deserve better.

**J GARFIELD
Halesowen**

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

LETTERS to the Editor**POST**

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Halt HS2 and use money to halt floods

FLOODING defences are the main priority for this country.

Lord Smith from the Environment Agency states that we may have to choose between which we want to protect from flooding, homes or Countryside as there isn't a bottomless money pit.

I say to Lord Smith there shouldn't have to be a choice. If this is to be the norm in the future, due to climate change, we may be having this problem of flooding every year. To me this has to be one of the main priorities for this country in this coming decade.

I'll tell Mr Smith and David Cameron where to find the money. To halt the programme on the HS2 and use the £80bn pounds on flooding defences for this country.

Having seen the devastating amount of flooding in parts of the country, surely this has to be one of the priorities.

B WHITEHOUSE
Wartell Bank
Kingswinford

Agency is just not up to scratch

PLEASE, could someone get the Environment Agency to wake up to its responsibility?

On Sunday we decided to go for a trip by car just to get a breath of fresh air. Being responsible we looked on the Flood Line to check where we should avoid. Surprise, surprise the warnings page was unavailable, due to 'problems'.

We live in the Black Country but we totally sympathise with those on the Somerset Levels, who have been ignored by those who are paid very well to do a job.

Perhaps the floods have to be in the South East of the country for people to get the service they deserve?

Even the 0845 number was a total mistake by those in charge.

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NEWS

Man buried up to his neck rescued by crews



The building site in Barclay Road, Bearwood, where a man had to be rescued after he became trapped in a hole

A WORKER had to be pulled to safety by emergency personnel from an 18ft hole where he was trapped after a massive collapse of soil on a construction site.

Ambulance crews, who could see only the head of the man in his 20s, scurried away earth to help free him at the start of a two and a half hour rescue operation on Monday afternoon.

The drama, in Barclay Road, Bearwood, began at about 2.20pm and

seven fire engines, six ambulance vehicles and three police cars were called to the scene.

The man was rushed to the Major Trauma Centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham to be treated for chest and suspected pelvic injuries. On the way he was given emergency treatment by a trauma doctor.

Helicopter

Barclay Road was closed between Lightwoods Hill and Upper St Mary's Road as seven fire engines, six ambulance vehicles, an ambulance helicopter and three police cars arrived.

Suzie Fothergill, spokeswoman for West Midlands Ambulance Service, said: "On arrival at the scene crews could only see the man's head."

"Ambulance personnel quickly dug away some of the earth to help free the man."

"Emergency services worked closely together for over two and a half hours to extricate the man safely from the trench."

Crews used specialist stretcher equipment and a hoist to finally release him from the hole.

The Health and Safety Executive has launched an investigation into the drama.

Independent Family Funeral Directors

Trevor E.W. Hickton Ltd, formally known as J.E.W. Hickton & Sons are a long established Funeral Directors based in Cradley Heath.

In 1909 Joe Hickton a well known carpenter, builder, undertaker, local counsellor and one time Mayor of Rowley Regis, opened a dedicated funeral home located in Lower High Street, Cradley Heath in the Black Country. His son William 'Bill' Hickton came in to the business in 1937 and the father and son partnership began carrying out funerals across Cradley Heath and the surrounding areas. Bill's son Trevor came in to the business in 1971 working closely with his father to continue building the company reputation. In 2005 the company was registered as a Limited UK company along with a name change to what it is today, Trevor E.W. Hickton Ltd Funeral Directors.

Trevor's son Ross came in to the business in 2007 and is now working closely with his father in the day to day running of the business and conducting of the funerals in the long established family business still located in Lower High Street. In late 2008 Trevor and Ross took over the running of R. Hadley Funeral Services in Halesowen. Carrying on the established business to the same standard and code of practice that of T. E. W. Hickton & Co. Trevor's other son Greg joined the business in 2010.

We offer advice on prepaid funeral plans. A funeral plan can save you money and provides invaluable peace of mind for you and your family. The reassurance gained from making arrangements in advance and these escalating costs are the reasons why nearly a million people in Britain have taken out a funeral plan.

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MEMORY LANE

Ready for battle – troops of 1st Parachute Squadron in action at Arnhem



Tom and comrades at barracks in Hampshire in 1939



Tom, aged 23, centre, with fellow trainee paras, in September, 1942



Tom Hicks pictured during a return to Arnhem in 2007



Soldier, soldier – Tom in his paratrooper's uniform, aged 23

Arnhem — Tom's memories of the battle for a bridge too far

by Mark Andrews

THE memories of the battle of Arnhem of Sapper Tom Hicks, who served in the 1st Parachute Squadron, are brought to life in a memoir written by his son Norman, of Kinver.

The memoir, based on personal diaries and taped recollections, paints a dramatic picture of what it was like for thousands of young men who took part in the ill-fated attempt to capture the bridge across the River Rhine in 1944.

Determination

Tom, who is now 94, describes his descent onto the landing zone at Renkum, around seven miles from Arnhem: "It took as little as 20 seconds to reach the ground and an immediate awareness came over you as you took in what was happening around and above you," he says. "Men, containers and loose debris were still rapidly descending. Looking up, the canopies were still falling around me presenting a colourful sight."

Tom's participation in Arnhem was the result of his determination to participate in the war effort. As a locomotive driver, he was in a reserved occupation and when he applied to join the Commandos he was refused leave from his railway duties. However, he then applied to join the paras, and they were told nobody could refuse to release anybody who had applied for the paras," says his son Norman, himself a 65-year-old former RAF man.

Tom tells of how he was filled with confidence when he, along with 2,277 other paratroopers, landed at Renkum on September 17, 1944. Almost immediately it became apparent that things were not going to plan.

Only half the Reconnaissance Squadron Jeeps arrived due to several gliders failing to make it. It was five hours before the British troops reached the key bridge over the Rhine and they were only able to control the northern end. They found themselves surrounded by German troops. Most of the group that Tom had been with during

the clean-up operation at the drop zone had been killed or injured. "It was obvious to us that things were beginning to fall apart," he says.

Tom had already received a shrapnel wound to the back of his neck and during the sixth day he was hit in almost exactly the same place. "I lost the sensation in my legs and I could feel the blood running down my back," he says.

He was taken by stretcher to a house which had been converted into a makeshift first-aid station. For Tom this would mean the end of the fighting. On September 24 a medical officer came in and told the injured men that the division would be retreating across the river and that the wounded would be left behind for the Germans to take prisoner.

"I lay on the floor for two days, during which time the house was hit by shell fire several times, and some of the wounded were wounded again," says Tom. "Men were moaning and some were screaming."

On September 26, the Germans announced their arrival by poking the gun of a

tank through the window of the house. "Ha! I am the gunner of this tank, the best tank in the world," sneered the young crewman.

An SS officer then came into the room, accompanied by three other soldiers, and inquired about the welfare of an injured SS sergeant lying next to Tom. "I could tell he was asking if we had treated him well," recalls Tom.

"Ja, ja," he replied, pointing at me and repeating, "komrad, komrad," explaining that I had given him water." The SS officer surprised Tom by shaking his hand.

Tom was taken to the Stalag XIB Prisoner of War camp. "Two of my mates came into see me before they were due to attempt to break out," Tom remembers. "They left with a wave and a final 'see you Tom, when we get home'." One of those friends was Allan 'Wakey' Wake, a 19-year-old. He was shot trying to make his escape across a river — one of more than 15,000 young men who never return.

Captured At Arnhem, from Railwayman to Paratrooper, is published by Pen & Sword Books, priced £25.



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NEWS

Cartoon capers just ticket for commuter

WHAT do you do to entertain yourself during the daily slog to and from work?

Perhaps you get stuck into a good book, read the paper, furiously try to smash your high score on Flappy Bird or maybe you have a snooze.

But one talented illustrator has found a new way to kill time on his train commute - by turning his fellow travellers into cartoon characters.

University of Wolverhampton graduate animator Joe Butcher, who is better known by his Twitter handle and pen name October Jones, has been using sticky notes and his seemingly boundless imagination to transform strangers on a train into hilarious cartoons.

Boredom

The unwitting victims of his pranks have given the features of beloved characters such as Batman, Spiderman, and, in one ingenious snapshot, Wile E. Coyote even appears to be chasing Road Runner.

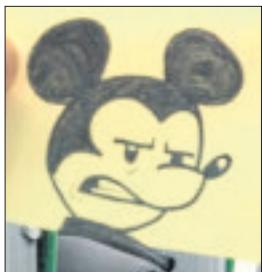
The clever creations are doodled onto the small pieces of paper, and then held in just the right position for a funny photograph to be taken - the image is then uploaded to social networking websites.

When asked on Twitter why he did took the time, Mr Butcher wrote: "I did them to combat boredom on my long commute."

He has seemingly shared his journeys with a gruff Winnie the Pooh, Danger Mouse's soft-spoken sidekick Penfold, Kermit The Frog, Daffy Duck and comic book favourite Hellboy.

People-cum-cartoons include an annoyed Mickey Mouse, with the caption: "Howdy, I'm on a train. This guy just caught me laughing at his squeaky voice."

ET the Extra Terrestrial also ap-



Who's taking the Mickey then?



One passenger turns in Batman



Where's Wally? Right here



Spiderman takes the train

pears to be slightly miffed. The Twitter caption reads: "On train. Found seat. I just told this guy off for using his phone in the Quiet Zone. I don't care who he's phoning."

The drawings have been getting world-wide attention, having been re-posted thousands of times on a number of social websites after initially

being tweeted to October Jones' 77,000 Twitter followers. Mr Butcher, under his pseudonym, is also the mastermind behind the -popular Texts From Dog, an internet craze that has led to two published books, called Texts From Dog and The Dog Delusion, the latter being published in October.

Picture credit: @OctoberJones



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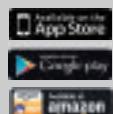


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NEWS

Water way to breathe life into tourist boat



Colin Clements working on the restoration of the 70ft Blackcountryman narrow boat at The Bonded Warehouse dry dock

A NARROWBOAT which showcases the West Midlands waterways to tourists has been on dry land for a £10,000 revamp.

But now the 70ft boat is ready to be returned to the water ahead of a new season of trips following the five-week restoration project.

The Blackcountryman takes hundreds of passengers on pleasure cruises operated by Stourbridge Navigation Trust.

It is moored at the Stourbridge Town Arm canal basin next to the canalside attraction, the Bonded Warehouse, off Canal Street, Stourbridge.

But after a season of toil up and down the waterways, it was time to take the boat into the trust's dry dock in early January for running repairs.

The fibre glass roof had been cracked having been exposed to the elements over the years and needed a revamp. Rotten wood has been removed from the roof hatchets and replaced, and improvements to the boat's disabled access have been made. There has also been a paint job to spruce up the outside which will be touched up once the boat is back in the water.

Ashwood-based J H Trimmings have produced new fixtures for the boat during the repair work overseen by dock manager Andy Downing.

The boat made 55 trips last year and Bonded Warehouse manager Colin Clements says they expect more this coming season. It acts as a regular fundraiser to help the navigation trust plough money into the maintenance of the canalside attraction and waterways.

Mr Clement said: "It was in need of a revamp and some running repairs so it was a good time for these to be done. The money we spend on the boat is as much an investment in the area because it is a part of the community."

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BLACKHEATH AND ROWLEY REGIS**Flying the flag for a special day**

DOZENS of civic dignitaries gathered for the ceremonial unveiling of a Commonwealth flag which will be hoisted to mark the contribution of its nations to life in the UK.

The Shri Venkateswara Balaji Temple in Tividale was chosen to host the event held to officially hand over the flag, which will be flown at council houses to mark Commonwealth Day on March 10. Around 150 leaders from authorities turned out, as well as Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Paul Sabapathy, whose duty it is to represent the Queen, and High Sheriff Christine Braddock.

Leo O'Toole, from the Hindu temple's management team, said the venue was chosen because of its reputation for hosting inter-faith events as well as supporting secular groups.

Town plan to be drawn up

DETAILED plans will be drawn up to improve bus services and traffic flow in a bid to increase visitors to Blackheath town centre.

Long-awaited proposals to improve bus reliability, reduce through traffic and improve the quality of the environment in general, were first unveiled last year.

A total of 164 people have had their say on plans to improve the area in a consultation.

Fundraiser and navy war hero Ben dies, aged 98

CHARITY fundraiser, Navy veteran and popular Black Country character Benjamin Haywood has died aged 98.

Blackheath-born former sailor Mr Haywood, who lived in Valley Road, Smethwick, walked thousands of miles to raise cash for charities after he retired.

Great-great-grandfather of three Mr Haywood, who walked between Land's End and John O'Groats six times, passed away at City Hospital.

by Adam Grinsell

He was awarded honorary citizenship of the Maltese port of Valetta.

He launched a campaign to clear the name of the Manchester's captain Harold Drew, who faced court martial for giving the order for the 800-strong crew of the Manchester to abandon ship. The Ministry of Defence would not be reopen the case.

He was known in Smethwick for delivering the Chronicle using an old pram.

His wife Stella, 86, said: "He didn't start the charity work until he was nearing retirement."

"He started off by doing walks to places like Bewdley, until someone suggested to him that he should do it to raise money. He did a lot for the blind."

His funeral takes place on Wednesday at Smethwick Old Church, The Uplands.



Royal Navy veteran and charity fundraiser Ben Haywood with a picture of his ship, the HMS Manchester

'Pocket' park idea at church

A BLACK Country church aims to create a 'pocket park' in the churchyard, with memorial benches and a prayer trail.

Now St Peter's in Cradley hosts the Green Space Team, which usually meets on the first Saturday of each month from 10am to 3pm to work on the graveyard, which was previously overgrown.

Ex-service people and offenders on a probation pay-back scheme are tidying up the cemetery, which contains several war graves.

Vicar of St Peter's for the last two and a half years, the Rev Kathryn Lecclezo, said: "We have seven acres of overgrown churchyard and, after remembrance services, people would say it was disgusting. As people have died or left the area the graves are no longer tended as they were."

Dance film stars pupils

A FILM featuring youngsters from special schools in Rowley Regis and Oldbury has been premiered in Sandwell.

Frontline Dance Company, runs the project, which has seen film-maker Matthew Beckett create films featuring pupils from The Meadows School, The Orchard School, both in Oldbury, The Westminster School in Rowley Regis and Bristmaw Hall Technology College.

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NEWS

Timber shop closing after 42 years trading

IT began with a small shop lined up for partial demolition and expanded into a three-store firm employing 14 people.

But now owner Peter Webb is closing down his beloved business and is looking forward to his first holiday in 14 years.

The 69-year-old says he 'thoroughly enjoyed' his time running Swinford Timber Supplies since opening the company's first shop in Hagley Road in Oldswinford, Stourbridge, with friend John Bangham in 1972. But his age, combined with increasing red tape, has made this year the right time to step down and close the business.

"The first thing I will do is take a holiday," said the former Longlands pupil, who joined the timber supply trade straight from school, aged 16. "It's been 14 years since I took a break. Now I feel it is the best time to step down and close the business."

"I also find its becoming more difficult over the years, what with the continuous Government ideas which seem to get in the way. Ten years ago, someone came on the site and told me I needed to be wearing gloves for the saw."

Mr Webb was born in West Hagley to Harry and Annie, owners of Webbs Bakery in Worcester Road.

He began work at a timber shop in Market Street in Stourbridge and then at a store in Church Street. Then, at the age of 27, he opened a shop with friend Mr Bangham in Hagley Road, Oldswinford.

But Dudley Council told him they were to bring the front of the shop down within five years as part of a project to widen Hagley Road. He said: "We went ahead with it anyway and luckily the plan never materialised."

After five years Mr Webb took sole ownership, expanded the firm and



Owner Peter Webb with his wife Jill outside Swinford Timber Supplies



Owner Peter Webb with his son Baron who also works in the shop

moved it two doors up the street, while opening a convenience store in the former shop. He then knocked through the rear of the store to increase the size before opening another shop in Wollaston in 1984. At its height, the company employed 14 people across its branches.

Today it stands as one small shop in Hagley Road, run by Mr Webb and his son Baron, 39.

Mr Webb said: "We have always looked to be as helpful as possible to our customers and I think they have appreciated it. It is that I will most miss when I retire, the chat and banter with customers. I'd like to thank them for their support."

Mr Webb has agreed the sale of the store, expected to close in March. Dudley Council granted permission to turn the shop into a tearoom.

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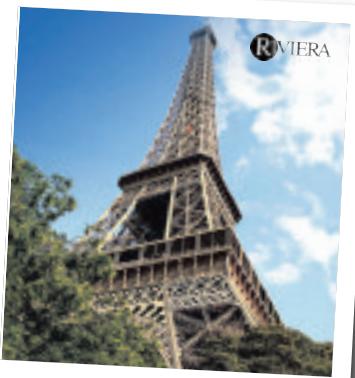
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NEWS

Dad with diabetic sons takes message to MPs

A FATHER has been chosen to speak at the House of Commons about how his young sons live with a severe form of diabetes.

Lee Bates from West Bromwich will represent JDRF, the type one diabetes charity, at the Type One Parliament on March 11.

His sons Alfie, aged five, and Charlie, three, both attend Moorlands Primary School and each of them have the condition.

Mr Bates, of Schofield Avenue, will be one of 60 adults and children whose lives are affected by type one diabetes to and have been selected from across the country to represent their 'constituencies'.

The exact cause of type one diabetes is unknown, but it is not linked to lifestyle or diet.

A child diagnosed with it at the age of five faces up to 19,000 insulin injections and 50,000 finger prick tests by the time they are 18.

Diagnosis

The condition affects 400,000 people in the UK – equivalent to more than 600 people in every parliamentary constituency – and incidence is growing rapidly, particularly in those under five years old.

One of the most noteworthy sufferers in Great Britain is home secretary Theresa May.

Mr Bates, aged 36, said: "Alfie's diagnosis when he was only 20 months old was a very difficult time for the family. Then for lightning to strike twice and Charlie to be diagnosed at only 30 months old was devastating. It means they can't always be care-free like other children can."

"It was very exciting to hear that I had been chosen to represent all those in our area living with the condition at Type 1 Parliament.



Alfie and Charlie Bates – whose dad is set to take up their cause

"Going to the House of Commons and talking to MPs will be a wonderful experience and a great opportunity to really make a difference."

Karen Addington, chief executive of JDRF, said: "Type one diabetes doesn't have to hold you back in life. But it is a very challenging condition to live with."

"That's why we're taking our message to Westminster in March," she said.

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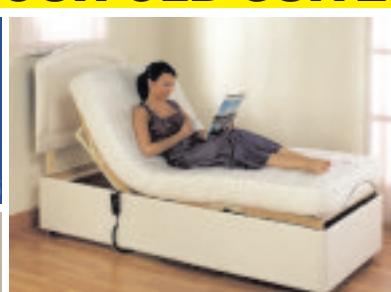
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NEWS**NEWS
in brief****Chance to vote
for mayor's hero**

NOMINEES in line to receive a prestigious community award have been announced with residents now asked to vote.

Three individuals and a group are in the running for the Mayor's Award. They have all been selected by Mayor of Dudley Councillor Alan Finch. The public can now vote for the one they feel most deserves the award. They can log on to www.dudley.gov.uk until March 9.

Nominees are John Deane, of Dudley's Royal Air Force Association, Priory Boxing Club's Paul Gough is also in the running. The other nominee is Apni Zaroor at Community Network in Lye, Community first responder charity First Aid Black Country has also been nominated.

**Six flats scheme
at 'eyesore' site**

A SCHEME to create six one-bedroom flats on vacant overgrown land has been approved by planners.

The site in Meeting Street Netherton, has long been 'an eyesore' for people living in a row of terraced houses opposite.

Members of Dudley Council development control committee on Monday said they were 'very pleased' the land would be developed. Only a single objection was raised to the plans from a nearby resident concerned it would be overdevelopment of the site but planning officers recommended the scheme be approved.

Savage budget cuts to be considered for borough

ARTS and youth services face being slashed and street lights switched off after midnight as part of a cost-cutting budget backed by senior councillors in Dudley.

Streets and parks will not be maintained as often and garden waste will go uncollected for five months of the year as part of the drastic series of measures.

The Labour-run council needs to save £34 million by 2016/17 but has warned it will face a further £23m funding gap. The cabinet's budget will go before members of the full council at a meeting on March 3 for the final decision.

Plan officer was pushed

A PREGNANT council officer was verbally assaulted and pushed by a man as she carried out a routine investigation at his home.

Intaj Ali, of 21, Meadow Road, Halesowen, was charged with obstructing the officer who was investigating a planning issue on March 19.

Dudley Magistrates Court found Ali guilty of verbally assaulting the officer, who was three months pregnant at the time of the incident, and physically pushing her from the site.

Ali was fined £150 for the offence and ordered to pay costs of £695 and compensation, to be paid directly to the officer, of £300 – a total sum of £1,145.

Councillor Judy Foster said: "One of our roles as a local authority is to identify, investigate and consider alleged planning breaches and take any necessary action."

"This process protects local residents and businesses. I hope that the court's judgement gives out a clear message that we will never tolerate abuse towards council officers."

"Council staff should not have to accept offensive and aggressive behaviour."

Among savings already identified are cuts to street cleaning, which will see residents being encouraged to hold their own litter picks, and plans to shorten the collection period for green waste to save £100,000. Some street lights will be turned off after midnight to reduce energy bills.

Closure

Maintenance of parks around the borough would be reduced to claw back £270,000.

Over the next two years changes will be made to some day centres to make savings and the youth service will also be scaled back, with possible closure of three centres.

The management of Kingswinford's Broadfield House Glass Museum could be transferred to a third party in a bid to trim £170,000 off the budget by 2015/16.

Further squeezes in arts funding are predicted including changes to the way Dudley Performing Arts is run.

A revamp of children's centres is also on the cards although initial plans to shut seven of the centres were scrapped following strong public opposition.

Finance boss Councillor Pete Lowe told the meeting there were still no plans to shut any of the centres. Opposition leader Councillor Patrick Harley said: "I would ask that if, in the future, any children's centres are at risk, that we have a fresh consultation."

The council is also looking at increasing car park charges across the borough to bring in £225,000 over the next three years.

The council has also warned there may be compulsory redundancies.

New style fitness camp



Ann Oqua gets a lift from Lee Morgan and Joshua Burchell

AN INTERNET entrepreneur from Dudley and his friend are to get tough at an urban boot camp club with a difference.

Joshua Burchell, aged 24, and Lee Morgan, 31, will launch Total Body Fitness (TBF) on Saturday, March 1, on the car park of Champions Church in Netherton. Their aim is to combine health and fitness awareness by inspiring people to "reduce blood pressures and body mass."

Joshua and Lee are both qualified trainers and first-aiders and have lost a combined weight of eight stone.

"There is a proven marketplace for outdoor training but what we have in mind is far from the perceived Sergeant Major-style delivery of barking orders," said Joshua. "Dudley, like most of the West Midlands, struggles with high levels of obesity and type 2 diabetes. We would like to think TBF could help towards addressing that problem."

The launch day begins at 10am on the floodlit site of Champions Church, Cinder Bank. Hour-long sessions will be held there on Tuesdays at 6pm, Thursdays at 7pm and Saturdays at 10am.

School in move bid due to the babyboom

A PRIMARY school has announced plans to relocate into bigger premises in a bid to cope with a baby boom.

St Hubert's Primary School in Oldbury will move to the vacant former Langley High School and Oldbury Academy site in Moat Road, should the plans be given the green light by Sandwell councillors.

A brand new school would be constructed.

Along with the school building itself, there would be car parking and external play areas, and pupils would also have access to adjacent playing fields.

In turn it is expected that the vacated site on Wolverhampton Road, currently under the ownership of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, could then be used to either expand an existing primary or create a brand new 210-place school.

The move is necessary as the current site is 'too irregular shaped', and access is too limited for an extra 210 pupils.

The scheme would be funded by the Government's multi-million pound Basic Needs Programme, as well as a contribution from the diocese.

It has not yet been announced how much the scheme would cost.

A report has been submitted to children's boss Councillor Simon Hackett and budget boss Councillor Steve Eling, who will both need to give the plan their approval.

Local Weekly Newspapers

**With You
All The Way**



The search is on to find ladies for Fawlty Towers

A VERSION of much-loved British sitcom Fawlty Towers is coming to the Black Country.

Members of Mayhem Theatre are busy rehearsing their homage to the popular show. But they are on the lookout for the last piece of the jigsaw – two actresses to play the parts of old dears Miss Tibbs and Miss Gatsby.

There will be a cast of 23, which includes Dave Francis Williams as angry hotel manager Basil Fawlty and Matt Webb as hapless Spanish waiter Manuel.

But group founder Mark Moran said the two ladies were essential to the production. He added: "We are hoping it will appeal to someone who may have retired from an drama but fancies a taste of it again or maybe to somebody who just thinks it sounds like fun. They wouldn't need to be there for every rehearsal but we would really like to have them in the production."

The group holds rehearsals on Wednesdays at the French Hen in Cleint. The original BBC comedy featured John Cleese as Basil Fawlty, Prunella Scales as his wife Sybil and Andrew Sachs as Manuel. Mayhem Theatre will be performing the show from April 30 to May 3 at the Hardwicke Theatre at Thorns Community College, Quarry Bank. Contact Mr Moran on 01215507977 or 07973779496 or visit www.mayhemtheatre.co.uk



Dave Francis Williams as Basil Fawlty with Matt Webb as Manuel for the stage version of Fawlty Towers

Transport services to be saved as staff are hit

AN EXTRA £1 million in cuts will have to be found from the staffing and operations budget at transport authority Centro after officials decided not to cut services to the public.

Councillors on the authority met last week to vote on the 2014/15 budget, with 15 councillors welcoming the proposals and seven voting against.

Initial plans to increase half-price children's bus fares to two-thirds were thrown out as councillors implemented a £7 million budget cut.

By Lisa O'Brien

staffing costs, which is suffering a loss of £3m.

Before the meeting at Centro House in Birmingham, dozens of West Midlands Pensioners Convention members gathered outside with placards calling for Ring and Ride services to be saved.

Councillor John McNicholas, who chaired the meeting, said it was only right for Centro to reduce the budget given the dramatic cuts in Government funding being faced by councils.

He made reassurances during the meeting that feedback had been taken on board, adding: "The proposals at the beginning were £2m cuts to the operations budget. We are considering £3m cuts from the operations budget to minimise the impact on services for people in the West Midlands."

The 60p fee for the service will be increased to £1 from April.

Councillors also voted to safeguard free bus travel after 11pm for older people, the blind and disabled.

Around 8,000 responses and three petitions were received during a consultation on the proposals, including one signed by 56,000 people making calls to maintain the level of funding to Ring and Ride services.

Now as a result of backtracking on the original proposals bosses will have to find another £1m of savings than originally planned from its operational and

Increased

The organisation had originally considered scrapping its funding for Ring and Ride, which provides a door-to-door service for pensioners and disabled people, but its annual grant will instead be cut to £8.5m – £2m less than this financial year.

The 60p fee for the service will be increased to £1 from April.

Councillors also voted to safeguard free bus travel after 11pm for older people, the blind and disabled.

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Strong winds led to alert at nightclub

SEVERE weather sparked a major operation in Brierley Hill last week after a large metal drainpipe on the side of a nightclub came loose in the rough winds.

Fears were high the cast-iron pipe, measuring 65ft, on the Pulse nightclub building could plummet into neighbouring buildings or crash on to the busy Dudley Road.

The road was closed off at its junctions with High Street and Venture Way after the dislodged pipe was reported by nearby workers at around 8.30am on February 13.

A hydraulic platform from Oldbury was despatched to help crews carry out the work. Because of the weight of the pipe, officers had to cut it into sections in order to safely remove it from the side of the nightclub building so it no longer posed a danger.

The strong winds and wet weather also uprooted trees in Gospel End Road, Sedgley, and Lawnswood Road, Stourbridge.

Concern at impact of teachers' strike

A TEACHER'S strike planned for next month will hit companies across the Black Country while leaving parents struggling to find childcare say business bosses.

The NUT says its members will walk out of classrooms across the West Midlands on March 26, in a dispute over pay, pensions and conditions. If the industrial action goes ahead, it will be the third national strike since 2011 and will mean parents are forced to either take a day off work to look after their child or find alternative care.

Ninder Johal, vice president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, which represents businesses across the area, said he believed the strike action would see a big impact on small and medium companies operating in the area.

He added: "I know the disruption action like this causes businesses. Parents will have less hassle in the sense that they have plenty of time to plan for it but this will cause lots of disruption for small and medium-sized enterprises."

Russ Bragger, general secretary of Walsall NUT, said members felt they had 'no choice' and had already put off industrial action in the hope of a breakthrough.

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ZOE 25 long haired sensual female, very naughty, broadminded and open, looking for similar fun guy for uncomplicated adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409719

JANE attractive, feminine open-minded mature female genuinely looking for adult fun. No time wasters please. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409715

JILL 50, attractive, 5ft, blonde, own home, no ties, likes films, reading, travel, music, good social circle, seeking that someone special. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410105

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 56, enjoys country walks, meals out, seeks professional gent with GSOH to enjoy the good things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409895

ELAINE attractive 39yr old blonde single mum seeking respectful male/dad with similar interests for adult friendship, hopefully leading to love. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409117

DONNA 27yrs blue eyed blonde with cute dimpled smile, loves socialising but looking for that special someone with GSOH to cuddle up with, enjoys fun/good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409733

ABI creative free spirited lady enjoys drama, photography, music, WLTM well-spoken patient, independent non-judgmental man. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409723

MARGARET OHAC, professional, sincere, adventurous, loving, kind, solvent lady who enjoys most things WLTM caring male with similar refined tastes. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409725

GOLDEN haired Asian orphan, looking for a strong hairy man who can make me feel pretty again. Willing to travel. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 426768

WENDY 50, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, likes music, meals out, seeks white male, 45-55 with similar interests and GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410499

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 36609

73YR old Hereford lady, GSOH, young at heart, many interests, seeks caring, genuine gent of similar age for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410331

NICKY bubbly curly fun blonde, varied interests, enjoys meals out, holidays, seeking N/S male with GSOH for possible fltr. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410479

ADVENTUROUS attractive lady seeks no strings causal times with discreet gent. Tel: No. 0905 002 1957 Box 409991

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTM for more than just friendship with similar chilled, kind, easy going guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410461

LIZ 5ft 7ins, attractive, outgoing, likes walks, dogs, cooking, seeks male for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410395

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 408297

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What's On!

The memories come flooding back for Grand star Denise

Slam Dunk rock festival at Civic
ROCKERS The All American Rejects will headline a popular music festival in Wolverhampton this year.

The Slam Dunk Festival attracted 5,000 people to the Wolverhampton Civic last year and organisers are hoping for even more this time around. The seven-stage event combines outdoor and indoor stages across the city.

Canterbury, Letlive, Bury Tomorrow, The Ghost Inside and Crown The Empire are also among the bands to perform in the festival's ninth year. The touring festival also takes place in Leeds and in Hertfordshire over three days in May, with the bands due to converge on Wolverhampton on Bank Holiday Monday, May 26. Tickets start from £38.50. All three dates sold out last year.

Fizzogs' panto time again... ay it

IRREPRESSIBLE Black Country comics The Fizzogs are back on the road with their characters the Froggatts and Cottrells presenting A Black Country Fairytale... Ay It!

Some of the area's best comedy talent combine for the show at Wolverhampton's Newhampton Arts Centre, in Dunkley Street, tonight and tomorrow. Tickets cost £12 and the show starts at 7.30pm.

For more information on Sue, Jackie, Deb and co's comic adventures, including their old lady hip hop flashmob in Birmingham city centre, see their website: www.fizzogproductions.co.uk

Musical Reyes of the sun

AT this year's Grammy awards The Gipsy Kings — at Wolverhampton Civic Hall tomorrow — shared the Best World Music Album award with South Africa's Ladysmith Black Mambazo for their first album in six years, Savor Flamenco.

Based in the Camargue region of southern France, the Gipsy Kings are made up of musicians from two families—the Reyes from Arles and the Bardiros from Montpellier. In the 1960s Jose Reyes was singing with acclaimed flamenco guitarist Manitas de Plata. He then had his own band, Los Reyes, with his sons. When Jose died in 1979, Nicolas and Andre began playing with the Bardiros.

Los Reyes means 'The Kings' and the band became The Gipsy Kings, 'Rumba Flamenco' which allows the group to combine traditional flamenco with pop, Latin and jazz.



Grammy award winners The Gipsy Kings are coming to Wolverhampton

WEST End star and TV presenter Denise Van Outen brings her new one-woman show to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this week.

Co-written by Terry Ronald with musical supervision by Kylie Minogue's musical collaborator, Steve Anderson, Some Girl I Used To Know is described as an uplifting look at modern womanhood set to songs of the 1980s and 90s.

It follows high-flying Stephanie Canworth on a musical journey down memory lane. She has it all — a successful career, supportive husband and is a media darling but a Facebook poke from an old flame bring memories flooding back.

Strictly

Denise Van Outen's stage performances include Tell Me On A Sunday, Chicago, Rent: Remixed and Legally Blonde, and her television roles include Mary in Hotel Babylon, Michaela in The Empress' New Clothes, Leigh Jackson in Babes in the Wood and Kim Blakeneay in Where the Heart Is. Last year she was runner-up in Strictly Come Dancing.

The play with music is staged for three nights at the Lichfield Street theatre from tonight to Saturday, plus a Saturday matinee. Tickets start at £14.50 and the box office can be contacted on 01902 429212.

There are more musical memories at the Grand on Sunday when David Al-



Stage star Denise Van Outen

acey, Des Coleman and Paul Drakely star as Frank, Sammy and Dean, bringing back the music of the kings of swing, the Rat Pack, by recreating a classic Las Vegas show featuring My Way, Mr Bojangles at That's Amore. Special guest is song and dance man Kenny Lynch.

Rod Stewart Musical Tonight's The Night, written by We Will Rock You's Ben Elton, is at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre Monday to Saturday featuring Sugababe Jade Ewen.

Jazz man with a famous name

HAVING one of the most famous actors on the planet for a father must be a challenge when you are trying to forge your own career but jazz composer and bass player Kyle Eastwood has managed to escape Clint's shadow.

Now in his 40s, and originally inspired by his father's jazz record collection, Kyle Eastwood has recorded six albums as a band leader and long ago left California to live in Paris. He and his band won acclaim for their latest album The View From Here, winning favourable comparisons with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers.

They will be in concert at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre on Saturday, April 26. Tickets cost £18 (£16 concessions). Call the box office on 01902 321321.

Zombies and Wytches alert

KEY gigs this week include singer-songwriters Newton Faulkner and Sam Brookes tonight at Birmingham 02 Academy. Black Country baggy rockers The Twang are at the Wulfrun on Saturday while Rizzle Kicks play the O2 Academy.

Beyonce brings her award-winning show to the LG Arena on Sunday. Rudimental are on stage at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Tuesday, the same day Spencer Davis returns with The Zombies, The Animals, The Yardbirds and Maggie Bell at Symphony Hall. Rising stars The Wytches play the Sunflower Lounge on Smallbrook Queensway on Thursday, February 27.

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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 22.02.14

CHOICE



Tom Jones

The Voice UK

BBC1, 7pm

While Will.i.am's team, including Anna McLuckie, Femi Santiago, James Byron, Jermain Jackman and Sophie-May Williams are all hoping they have the right stuff to go all the way to the final, that is no guarantee of post-series success. Of course anything can happen during this latter stage of the blind auditions, and with new mentors – Kylie and Ricky Wilson – shaking things up in recent weeks, it looks like regulars Tom Jones and Will.i.am have their work cut out if they're going to keep their turns in the game and stand a chance of winning.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast: **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live, **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** BBC News: Regional News; Weather, **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union, **3.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union, **5.35** BBC News: Weather, **6.15** *Pointless Celebrity*. A TV quiz show with Rustie Lee, Antony Worrall Thompson, Theo Randall, Rachel Allen, Jean-Christophe Novelli, Paul Hollywood, Gino D'Acampo and John Whaite. (R)

7.00 The Voice UK: The final round of blind auditions – the last chance for the remaining hopefuls to win a place on Kylie Minogue, Will.i.am, Tom Jones or Ricky Wilson's teams.

8.30 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins: Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers list what they know about given subjects, including the National Lottery draw with Gaby Roslin. Last in the series.

9.20 Casualty: Fletch's daughter runs away from home and lands herself in trouble. Ro has to discover why a teenage girl is lying and a woman is brought in after tripping over a paving stone.

10.10 BBC News: Weather, **10.30 Match of the Day:** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the FA Cup semi-final between Chelsea v Everton at Stamford Bridge and Arsenal v Sunderland at the Emirates Stadium; National Lottery Update.

11.55 The Football League Show: Highlights of today's games. **1.15 Weatherview:** **1.20 BBC News.**

BBC2

7.15 Film: *The Magic Box*, (1951) **8.00** Live Winter Olympics. Coverage on the 15th and penultimate day of the Games. **11.30 Escape to the Country.** (R) **12.00 Flotsam Trade Secrets.** (R) **12.30 Live Winter Olympics.** Further coverage of the penultimate day of the Games in Russia. **4.00 Live Winter Olympics.** The men's alpine skiing slalom, **4.50 First Series:** **5.05** *Pointless* after Olympics. Further coverage of the men's alpine skiing slalom, **5.35 Final Score.**

6.00 Live Winter Olympics: The live coverage from Russia continues, including Centre Sanki in Krasnaya Polyana, with Clare Balding introducing the second run in the men's four-man bobsleigh competition. Scores will be subject to change.

7.10 Winter Olympics: Today at the Games: Highlights from the 15th day of the Games in Russia.

8.00 Top Gear: Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May demonstrate their love of small cars, with a trip to Ukraine. (R)

9.00 The Lost Portrait of Bonnie Prince Charlie: A Culture Shock Special: David Grossman tries to track down a missing painting of Charles Edward Stuart by artist Allan Ramsay in the hope of unravelling one of the greatest mysteries in British art.

10.00 QI XL: With Katy Brand, Sue Perkins and David Mitchell.

10.45 Film: *There Will Be Blood*.

(2007) Historical drama, starring Daniel Day-Lewis.

1.15 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.35 The Hoops: (R) **7.00 Trans World Sport:** **8.00** *The Morning Line*, **9.00** *Everybody Loves Raymond*. (R) **9.30 Frasier:** (R) **10.00 Frasier:** (R) **10.35 The Big Bang Theory:** (R) **11.00 The Big Bang Theory**, (R) **11.30 How I Met Your Mother:** (R) **12.00 How I Met Your Mother:** (R) **12.25 The Simpsons:** (R) **1.30 Channel 4 Racing:** **4.10 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **4.40 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **5.10 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **5.40 Superstar Dogs: Countdown to Crufts:** A German shepherd, a border collie and a Labrador-Staffie cross compete.

6.45 The Restoration Man: George Clarke follows a couple's project to transform a derelict flint mill in Stone, Staffordshire, and uncovers the link between the building and the work of Josiah Wedgwood. (R)

8.00 Take Me Out: Mr Wales, 2013, a semi-pro wrestler, a champagne importer and a cleaner try to impress the panel and win a date to the Isle of Fernando. Last in the series.

9.50 The Jonathan Ross Show: The host subjects another batch of celebrity guests to his trademark questioning. Plus, musical performances by A-list bands and solo artists.

10.50 ITV News: Weather.

11.05 Film: *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*.

(2006) **1.00 Jackpot247:** **3.00** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.45 ITV Nightscreen:**

CHANNEL 4

6.35 The Hoops: (R) **7.00 Trans World Sport:** **8.00** *The Morning Line*, **9.00** *Everybody Loves Raymond*. (R) **9.30 Frasier:** (R) **10.00 Frasier:** (R) **10.35 The Big Bang Theory:** (R) **11.00 The Big Bang Theory**, (R) **11.30 How I Met Your Mother:** (R) **12.00 How I Met Your Mother:** (R) **12.25 The Simpsons:** (R) **1.30 Channel 4 Racing:** **4.10 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **4.40 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **5.10 Come Dine with Me:** (R) **5.40 Superstar Dogs: Countdown to Crufts:** A German shepherd, a border collie and a Labrador-Staffie cross compete.

6.45 NCIS: A sailor's body is discovered in a disused restaurant, and his death is initially ruled as an accidental drug overdose – but Abby discovers evidence suggesting he was murdered. (R)

7.30 NCIS: A nuclear power plant inspector suffers radiation poisoning, forcing the team to consider the possibility that a foreign power deliberately targeted him. (R)

8.30 The NCIS Movie: Legend: The agents travel to L.A. to work with another NCIS team on an investigation that escalates into a high-priority case, and Tony begins to pry into the past. (R)

10.10 Film: *Nora Roberts' Midnight Brides:* (2009) Premieres. An attorney investigates the dark history of his mansion to discover a secret behind a haunting. Supernatural romantic drama, with Jerry O'Connell and Lauren Stamile.

11.55 Film: *Cop Land*.

(1997) **1.45 Boss:** **2.45** One Minute Past Midnight. (R) **2.55** One Born Every Minute. (R) **3.55** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Access: **10.15 Film:** *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*. (2009) **12.00 Film:** *Sabrina*. (1995) Romantic comedy remake, with Harrison Ford and Julia Ormond. **2.25 Diagnosis Murder:** (R) **3.25 Film:** *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. (R) **4.25 Film:** *Columbo: The Most Crucial Game*. (1972) **6.40 5 News Weekend:**

6.45 NCIS: A sailor's body is discovered in a disused restaurant, and his death is initially ruled as an accidental drug overdose – but Abby discovers evidence suggesting he was murdered. (R)

7.30 NCIS: A nuclear power plant inspector suffers radiation poisoning, forcing the team to consider the possibility that a foreign power deliberately targeted him. (R)

8.30 The NCIS Movie: Legend: The agents travel to L.A. to work with another NCIS team on an investigation that escalates into a high-priority case, and Tony begins to pry into the past. (R)

10.10 Film: *Nora Roberts' Midnight Brides:* (2009) Premieres. An attorney investigates the dark history of his mansion to discover a secret behind a haunting. Supernatural romantic drama, with Jerry O'Connell and Lauren Stamile.

12.00 SuperCasino: **3.10 Benidorm:** **4.15 Stargate Wars:** (2009) **4.25 Make It Bigger:** **4.50 The Fighting**

5.00 Angels of Jarm: (R) **5.10 Hana's Helpline:** (R) **5.20 Angels of Jarm:** (R) **5.30 The Funky Valley Show:** (R) **5.40 Hana's Helpline:** (R)

Listings supplied by Press Association

DIGITAL

BBC Three: **2.00** Great Movie Mistakes: Revenge of the Fifth. **7.15 Doctor Who:** **8.00 Doctor Who:** The Ultimate Guide. **9.00 Film:** Little Fockers. (2010) **10.30 Family Guy:** **BBC Four:**

7.00 Wild China: **8.00** Lost Kingdoms of South America. **9.00 School of Rock:** **10.45 Jules Number 1:** (at the BBC) **11.40 Forever Young – How Rock 'n' Roll Grew Up:** **ITV2:**

3.40 Brit Awards 2014: **5.55 Film:** The Perfect Man. (2005) **8.00 Film:** Ocean's Eleven. (2001) **10.20 Celebrity Juice:** Saturday Night Takeaway. **Special:** **11.10 Film:** Hannibal. (2001)

ITV3: **3.50 Film:** Clockwise. (1986) **5.45 Film:** Agatha Christie's Poirot. **6.55 Film:** Rosemary & Thyme. **8.00 Doc Martin:** **9.00 Vera:** **11.00 A Touch of Frost:** **ITV4:**

2.10 Film: The Appaloosa. (1966) **4.15 Storage Wars:** (2009) **5.20 Film:** Superman II. (1980) **7.55 Film:** Rude(ish). **Tube:** **5.30 How I Met Your Mother:** (2009) **6.30 Film:** Airplane!. (1980) **8.00 Film:** Gruffudd. (1998) **10.50 Film:** Above the Law. (1988)

E4: **3.30** *The Big Bang Theory* **4.30** *Rude(ish)* **Tube:** **5.30 How I Met Your Mother:** **6.30** *The Big Bang Theory* **7.30** *How I Met Your Mother: **8.00** *The Tomorrow People* **8.30** *Film:* *Airplane!* (1980) **10.50** *Film:* **Tube:** **11.50** *The Big Bang Theory**

Film4:

3.10 *Clockwise* **4.30** *Rude(ish)* **5.30** *Storage Wars:* (2009) **6.30** *How I Met Your Mother: **7.30** *The Big Bang Theory* **8.00** *How I Met Your Mother: **9.00** *Babylon AD:* (2008) **10.45** *Carrivers:* (2009)**

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What's On!

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SUNDAY'S TV 23.02.14

CHOICE



Laura Main

Call the Midwife BBC1, 8pm

Babies, medical emergencies, period costumes – no wonder this series continues to clean up in the ratings, it's got all the ingredients you could possibly want from a Sunday night drama. And for anyone who thinks it might benefit from a little more romance, you're in for a treat this week as Trixie catches the eye of the local curate, Tom. While we normally wouldn't have thought Nonnatus House's resident blonde bombshell would be the type to have her head turned by a clergyman, she's thrilled when he asks her to join him for a day of cricket.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast: 7.30 Match of the Day. (R) 8.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. **11.00 Saturday Kitchen:** Best Bites. **12.15 MOTD2 Extra:** 1.00 BBC News: Weather. **1.15 Bargain Hunt:** 1.30 The Great Dorset Sale. (R) **2.55 Flap It! Trade Secrets:** (C) **3.30 Escape to the Country:** (R) **4.15** Deadly 60 on a Mission: Pole to Pole. **4.45 Songs of Praise:** 5.20 Pointless Celebrities. (R)

6.10 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.30 Handbags: Clarence and Connie's terrifying sister Charlotte arrives – and threatens to stay for good.

7.00 Countryfile: From the Isle of Portland off the Dorset coast, wildlife presenter Kate露易丝·劳德(Louise Luard) for the 1976 world drivers' championship. (R)

8.00 Top Gear: Jeremy Clarkson drives the hand-crafted Touring Supergegar Disco Volante and Richard Hammond experiences the Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG 6x6.

9.00 Dragons' Den: Aspiring entrepreneurs pitch ideas including a gloomy-thrash sportswear brand and a uniquely shaped energy-saving device and a confidence-building children's toy.

10.00 Alan Davies Apres-Ski: The comedian and his guests compete in the latest from Sochi. Last in the series. (R)

10.30 Line of Duty: Denton gathers compromising evidence to use against AC-12. (R)

11.30 Film: *Of Time and the City*. (2003) Documentary in which film maker Tracey Davies examines how his home city of Liverpool has changed.

12.45 Film: *Silkwood*. (1983) 2.50 Sign Zone: *Countryfile*. (R) 3.45 Holby City. (R)

1.15 Weatherview: 1.20 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: Bachelor Knight. (1947) 7.30 Monty Don's English Gardens. (R) 8.30 *Countryfile*. (R) 9.30 Live Winter Olympics. Coverage of the final day of the Games in Russia. **2.30** Live Winter Olympics. A look back at some of the highlights of the Winter Olympics. **4.00** Live Winter Olympics Closing Ceremony. The 22nd Winter Olympics are officially brought to a close.

7.00 Hunt vs Laude: F1's Rivals:

Documentary using archive footage and interviews with key players to chart the battle between Britain's James Hunt and South Africa's Nelson

Lauder for the 1976 world drivers' championship. (R)

8.00 Top Gear: Jeremy Clarkson drives the hand-crafted Touring Supergegar Disco Volante and Richard Hammond experiences the Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG 6x6.

9.00 Dragons' Den: Aspiring entrepreneurs pitch ideas including a gloomy-thrash sportswear brand and a uniquely shaped energy-saving device and a confidence-building children's toy.

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12.45 Film: *Silkwood*. (1983) 2.50 Sign Zone: *Countryfile*. (R) 3.45 Holby City. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITY: *Dino Dan*. 6.10 *Dino Hoobs*. (R) 6.25 Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) 6.45 *Canimals*. (R) 6.55 *Canimals*, (R) 7.00 *Canimals*, (R) 7.10 *Om Nom Stories*. (R) 7.15 *Sooty* Theory. (R) 7.30 *The Big Bang Theory*. (R) 7.45 *Shark School*. (R) 7.50 *Wardrobe, She Wrote*. (R) 10.20 *Dickinson's Real Deal*. (R) 11.20 **ITV News: Weather**. **11.30 Countrywise**. **11.45 Inside the National Trust**. **12.45 Film:** *Evil Under the Sun*. (1982) **3.00 Film:** *One Man and a Secret Service*. (1969) **5.50 Regional Programme:** *Weather*.

6.05 ITV News: Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice: With only five stars left in the competition, the pressure increases to make them move all the way to the top, including a routine without the support of their professional partners. The results are at 8.30pm.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes: (R)

8.30 The Skating Show: The last place in the semi-final.

9.00 Mr Selfridge: Harry organises a patriotic concert to raise money for the troops, and having offered to help the government to recruit, orders to leave London on a secret mission to Berlin.

10.00 ITV News at Ten: Weather.

10.15 It'll Be Alright on the Night: TV bloopers. (R)

11.15 Premiership Rugby Union: 12.20 The Store. 2.15 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) 3.45 **ITV Nightscreen**.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs: (R) 6.25 *The Hoobs*. (R) 6.55 *FreePress* on 4. **7.30 Arenacross:** 8.00 *Frasier*. (R) 8.25 *The Taste*. (R) 9.30 **Sunday brunch**. **12.30 The Big Bang Theory**. (R) 1.00 *Shark School*. (R) 1.15 *Wardrobe, She Wrote*. (R) 10.20 *Dickinson's Real Deal*. (R) 11.20 **ITV News: Weather**. **11.30 Countrywise**. **11.45 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast**. (R) 1.30 **Deal or No Deal**. **5.00 Film:** *The Devil Wears Prada*. (2006) Comedy drama, starring Meryl Streep.

7.40 Channel 4 News:

8.00 The Edwardian Grand Designer: A Time Team Special: Tony Robinson goes to the scenes of the National Trust's £11million restoration of Castle Drogo in Devon and finds out about the life and work of its architect Edwin Lutyens.

9.00 Film: Bridesmaids: (2011) Premiere. A disorganized woman takes charge of her best friend's bridal party, but finds she has a rival in the wife of the groom's boss. Comedy, written by Kristen Wiig and Rose Byrne.

11.25 Film: Sex and the City: (2008) Journalist Carrie prepares for her wedding, but fiancé Big is starting to get cold feet. Starring Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon.

1.55 Boss: Karen takes a break from City Hall. 2.55 *One Born Every Minute*. (R) 3.00 **ITV News**. (R) 3.15 **ITV News**. (R) 3.30 **ITV News**. (R) 3.45 **ITV News**. (R) 3.50 **Deal or No Deal**. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake: *Peppa Pig*. **6.05 Roary the Racing Car**. (R) **6.15 Fifi and the Flowertots**. (R) **6.25 Bubble Guppies**. (R) **6.35 The Mr Men Show**. (R) **6.50 Chloe's Closet**. (R) **7.00 Roobarb and Custard Too**. (R) **7.10 The Wiggles**. **7.20 Jamjam**. **7.25 Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures**. (R) **7.40 City of Friends**. (R) **7.55 Little Princess**. (R) **8.05 Olly the Little White Van**. (R) **8.10 The Bill** and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25 Angelina Ballerina**. (R) **8.40 Rupert Bear**. (R) **8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom**. (R) **9.15 Jelly Jamm**. (R) **9.30 Power Rangers Dino Charge**. (R) **9.35 Power Rangers Megaforce**. (R) **11.00 Access**. (R) **11.10 The Dog Rescuers**. (R) **11.45 Ice Road** Inspectors. (R) **12.00 The Only Way Is Essex**. **11.00 Utterly Outrageous Reality TV Moments 2013**

1.35 5 News:

6.40 Film: The Man in the Iron Mask: (1998) The Thirty Years' War. A plot to dispose of the King of France and place his imprisoned twin brother on the throne.

7.00 Film: The Ocean's Thirteen: (2004) **7.30 Film: Junior**. (R) **7.45 Film: The Big Bang Theory**. (2007) **7.55 Film: The Keeper**. (2009) **11.00 Hell on Wheels**. **11.55 Nitro Circus**

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** **Pop's Greatest Dance Crazes** **7.25** **The Voice UK** **9.00 Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents: Thailand** **10.00 Family Guy** **10.45 Uncle Grandpa** **BBC Four** **7.00** **Francesco's Italy Top to Toe** **8.00** **The Review Show** **9.00** **Bonfire Night** **9.30** **Bloody-mindedness** **Concrete Poetry with Jonathan Meades** **10.00 Film:** **In a Better World** **(2010) 11.50 BB King – The Life of Riley** **ITV2** **3.50 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night** **4.00** **Midway 5.15 Film:** **Junior** (1994) **7.30 Film:** **Ocean's Thirteen** (2004) **10.00 The Only Way Is Essex** **11.00 Utterly Outrageous Reality TV Moments 2013** **ITV3** **2.55 Agatha Christie's Marple** **4.55 Lewis 7.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot** **9.00 Ronnie Corbett's Comedy Britain** **10.00 Inspector Morse** **ITV4** **2.50 Film:** **Northwest Mounted Police** (1940) **5.20 Film:** **Nevada Smith** (1966) **9.00 Film:** **Premiership Rugby Union** **9.45 Film:** **The Keeper** (2009) **11.00 Hell on Wheels** **11.55 Nitro Circus** **E4** **3.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD** **4.00 The Tomorrow People** **5.00 Troy** **6.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine** **6.30 The Big Bang Theory** **8.00 Film:** **Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs** (2009) **10.00 The Big Bang Theory** **10.30 My Mad Fat Diary** **11.30 Rules of Engagement** **Film4** **2.35 At the Earth's Core** (1976) **4.20 Freaky Friday** (1976) **6.15 Independence Day** (1996) **9.00 Unknown** (2011) **11.15 The Talented Mr Ripley** (1999)

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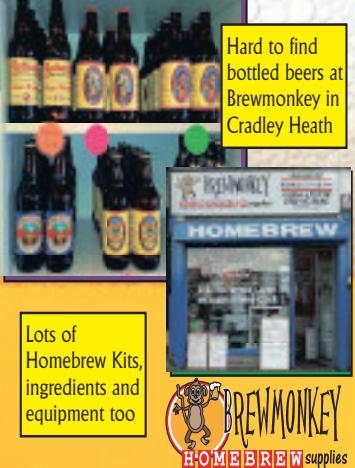


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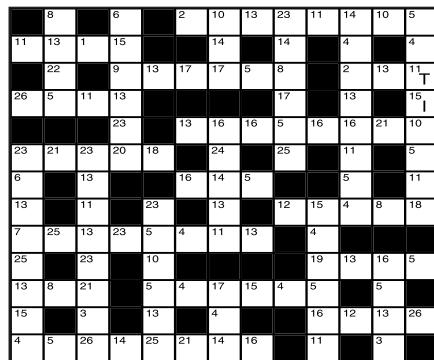


Puzzler**Brain Gym**

No.261

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	F	P	W	X	V	H	I	K	U	C	S	Q	N
14	O	J	Y	A	L	B	Z	T	E	R	M	G	D

Double Crossword

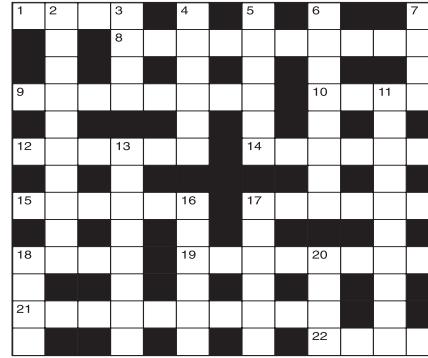
Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:**Across**

- Word associated with poker, but it's not flush! (4)
- One is certain to be this (10)
- Was present and listened (8)
- Stops and objects (4)
- It's not very often one gets a letter ahead of time! (6)
- Picnic, perhaps (3,3)
- His work's a grind (6)
- Walk the street with a list (6)
- Deserted port (4)
- Give an undertaking to shrink? (8)
- He's versatile, but liable to go to pieces (3,2,5)
- Take the last drop (4)

Down

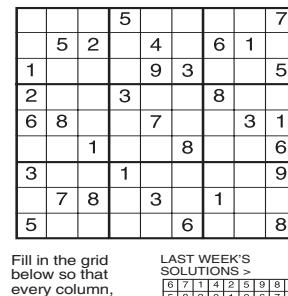
- Order to the non-conformist on the track? (3,3,4)
- Vague letter of little value (4)
- Holiday when one is not at one's best (3,3)
- Promise to put a shelf on quietly (6)
- Film executive on board (8)
- Service accommodation (4)
- Unpopular second feature that's apt to grow on one (6,4)
- One of the family may be oriental (8)
- It has all the right ingredients (6)
- Various indications it's not raining (6)
- City where mail goes astray (4)
- Charge for a plant (4)

**Quick Clues:****Across**

- Girl (4)
- Dictatorial (10)
- Victorious (10)
- Finished (8)
- Percolate (4)
- Painter (6)
- Show clearly (6)
- Resting (6)
- Threafold (6)
- Wound-mark (4)
- Cannibal (8)
- Happy (10)
- Above (4)

Down

- Strop (6)
- Hinder (6)
- Punish (8)
- Pace (4)
- Great merit (10)
- Blend (8)
- Perpetrate (6)
- Ligament (6)
- Sieve (4)
- Too (4)

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5 6 2 3 1 9 6 7 4
4 9 3 6 8 7 2 5 1
2 3 7 5 4 1 8 6 9
9 1 6 7 3 5 4 2
8 4 5 2 9 6 3 1 7
7 5 8 1 3 2 4 9 6
1 2 4 9 8 7 3 5
3 6 9 7 5 4 1 2 8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Altar; 8 Rioters; 9 Tickets; 10 Fault; 12 First of all; 15 Incapacity; 18 Deter; 19 Neutron; 21 Galleon; 22 Angel. Down: 1 Master-mind; 2 Stick; 3 Free; 4 Wrists; 5 Confront; 6 Refusal; 11 Tolerantly; 13 Importer; 14 Scuttle; 16 Canine; 17 Drags; 20 Utah; 21 Neutron; 22 Starlings; 15 Pianist; 16 Cherry; 17 Native States; 21 Reviles; 22 Faise. Across: 1 Decoration; 2 Erase; 3 Char; 4 Astem; 5 Abattoir; 6 Despol; 11 Ring-master; 13 Tenderly; 14 Achieve; 16 Insist; 17 Skill; 20 Rife.

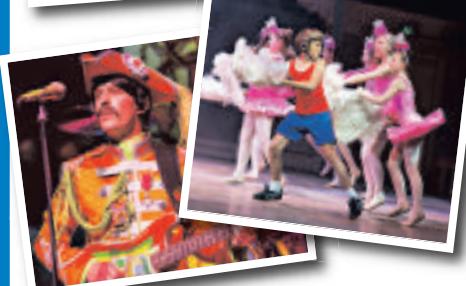
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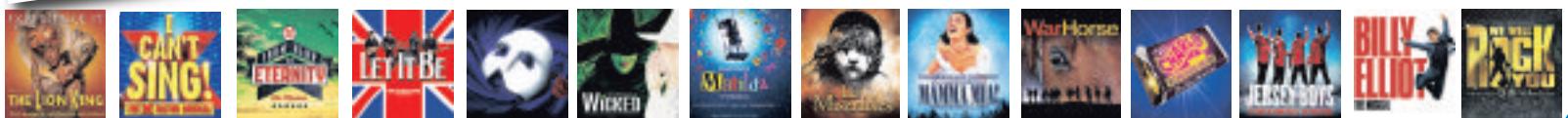
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Property

Five bedrooms at a detached family home



A five-bedroomed detached house in Summerhill, Kingswinford, is for sale through the Lee Shaw Partnership at £535,000.

It comprises entrance, reception hall and staircase to the first floor, a cellar and re-fitted guest cloakroom. All the reception rooms have fireplaces. These include the front-facing drawing room, a front-facing dining room and morning room. There is also a study.

The kitchen has substantial stylish cream units and black work surfaces and includes a Belfast sink and a quarry tiled floor. There is also a pantry, lobby, side entrance, a rear lobby, utility room, sitting room, a separate landing, a bathroom with a roll top bath and separate toilet, a master bedroom with an en suite, four further bedrooms, garage and a rear garden. The front features a gravelled driveway/forecourt.

Contact the Lee Shaw Partnership on 01562 888111 or visit www.leeshaw.com



Living space spread over three floors



A THREE-STOREY six bed roomed residence in Devonshire Road, Smethwick has excellent accommodation. It is for sale through Bairstow Eves at £349,000.

It has an entrance porch, entrance hall, two reception rooms, a kitchen/diner, utility/second kitchen, downstairs guest WC/shower, two en suite shower rooms, central heating, double glazing, a front driveway for off-road parking and a garage.

The front reception room has a stone fireplace and French glazed bi-folding doors to the rear reception room. The rear garden has a patio area with steps leading down to lawned area.

For further information contact Bairstow Eves on 0121 444554 or visit the website www.bairstoweves.co.uk



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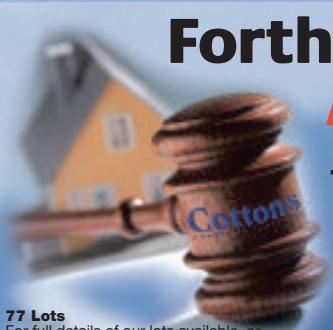
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A secluded location for large Edwardian home



A SUBSTANTIAL five-bedroom Edwardian detached home which has been recently refurbished is on the market for offers of £385,000 with the agent Paul Dubberley.

Retaining many original features, such as large open fireplaces, coved ceilings and large windows with excellent views, the house at Squires Walk, Wednesbury is a very secluded property, approached via a large lawn area with paved patio to the front and parking to the rear.

The accommodation comprises a reception hall with parquet flooring, dining room, drawing room, lounge, fitted kitchen, utility room, five bedrooms, master with en suite and fitted bathroom suite.

To arrange a viewing call the agent on 0121 505 3533 or visit the website at www.pauldubberley.co.uk where further images are available.



Stylish semi with a bespoke kitchen

THIS property in Finchfield Lane, Finchfield, Wolverhampton is an immaculate and stylish four-bedroomed traditional semi-detached home.

It is for sale through Peter James Property at £299,950. The accommodation includes a large porch, through lounge, sitting/dining room, bespoke kitchen, utility, cloakroom, master bedroom en-suite, large family bathroom/shower room with spa-style bath and underfloor heating, three further bedrooms, potential for a loft conversion, upstairs WC, lovely landscaped gardens, double-glazed leaded windows, gas central heating, a garage and off-road parking for three cars. Call Peter James Property on 01902 754777 or visit the website at www.peterjamesproperty.com



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143 High Street
• Blackheath Town Centre
• Professional offices
• Potential retail shop with first floor storage
• Prominent position adjacent to new library
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• Might sell
• Viewing by appointment
EPC = G
Annual rent of £11,000

Cradley Heath



COMMERCIAL

Unit 6 Corngreaves
76 Graingers Lane
EPC = G
• Industrial unit having gross internal floor area 182.32 sq.m. (885 sq.ft.)
• Kitchen, WC, mezzanine office.
• Ideal for food preparation.
• Off-road parking.
• Vacant possession available.
Annual rent of £4,500

Oldbury



COMMERCIAL

684 Wolverhampton Road
EPC = C
• Lock-up shop and premises.
• Extensive retail area 4.47m wide x 9.35m deep.
• Store/kitchen 4.31m x 3.85m
• Forecourt parking
• New lease for 5 years
• Rent £8,500 per annum plus rates
Annual rent of £8,500

Oldbury



Broadway Croft
Extended Semi Detached
• Through Lounge & Dining Room
• Conservatory
• Kitchen, Utility and WC
• Well appointed bathroom & En-suite
• Side Garage
EPC=D
£199,950

Rowley Regis



Dovey Grove
• Three storey town house
• Two good sized bedrooms (two with en-suites)
• Flexible accommodation
• Kitchen/dining room with balcony
• Integral garage
• EPC = C
Offers In the region of £177,250

Rowley Regis



Duke Street
Semi detached house
• Two living rooms
• Two good sized bedrooms
• Modern kitchen
• Rear garden
EPC = E
Offers In the region of £124,950

Halesowen



Whitefriars Drive
Terraced House
• Re-Fitted Kitchen/Breakfast Room
• Living Room, Two Bedrooms
• Family Bathroom
• Rear Garden
EPC = b/c
Offers In the region of £129,950

Halesowen



TO LET

Halesowen



TO LET

Cradley Heath



TO LET

Stourbridge Wollescote



Longmoor
Springfield Avenue
• Modern semi-detached house
• 2 bedrooms (1 with fitted wardrobes)
• Fitted kitchen with oven, hob, hood & fridge
• Modern bathroom suite with shower
• Garden with shed * Available from March * MUST VIEW!! * EPC=D
Monthly rent of £535+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

Harborne



70 Tennal Road
• 3 bedroom semi-detached house
• Popular location in Harborne
• Modern fitted kitchen with oven & hob
• Stylish bathroom with separate shower cubicle * UPVC DW & GCH * Off road parking & garden * Available NOW!! * MUST VIEW!! * EPC=D
Monthly rent of £775+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

Smethwick



53 Wattis Road
• Lovely 2 bedroom terraced house
• Both bedrooms are double
• Great location for commuting into City
• Kitchen, UPVC DW & GCH
• Off road parking & garden * Available NOW!! * MUST VIEW!! * EPC=D
Monthly rent of £550+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

Rowley Regis



4 Yates Lane
• Modern 2 bedroom house
• Stylish neutral decoration/fittings
• Fitted kitchen with appliances
• En-Suite bath, shower room or shower room to both bedrooms * Internal alarm * Gated car-park * GCH & DGW
* MUST VIEW!! * EPC=C
Monthly rent of £565+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

Hicks Hadley

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Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Haden Road £1,500 pcm - Fees An impressively proportioned traditional period family home with a wealth of character features. Featuring 5 bedrooms, 3 good size reception rooms, large garden, double garage, off road parking and gas central heating. Double plaster wall, gated side entrance leading to ample off road parking, easy to maintain fully enclosed rear garden. **VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** TO APPRECIATE THE PROPORTIONS OF THIS PERIOD PROPERTY. EPC: F



WEOLEY CASTLE, Barnes Hill £975 pcm - Fees A huge detached house close to Newman University. This property features 2 large reception rooms, modern kitchen, utility room, 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, separate WC, large garden with a summer house, driveway for 2 cars. Benefits also include double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Century Way £750 pcm - Fees A stunning end terrace townhouse on a new build estate. This 4 bedroomed property consists of a spacious lounge with feature fireplace, separate dining room, modern kitchen, guest WC, master bedroom with ensuite, family bathroom with shower, small rear garden, garage and driveway parking. EPC: C



NEW

HALESOWEN, Huntington Crescent £650 pcm - Fees Beautifully presented and within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This 3 bedroom townhouse features a fitted kitchen, large lounge with space for a dining area, house bathroom with shower, low maintenance rear garden, double glazing and gas central heating, driveway and garage. EPC: D



OLD SWINFORD, Hall Street £650 pcm - Fees This semi detached bungalow enjoys a much sought after location conveniently situated for access to local amenities and to public transport links. The property has a large lounge, dining room, kitchen and has a large living room with patio doors leading to a sun room, fully fitted kitchen with integrated fridge/freezer, bathroom with separate shower, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, driveway and garage. EPC: TBC



ROWLEY REGIS, Alwin Road £650 pcm - Fees This detached house in a cul-de-sac location. Located close to local shops and transport links. Featuring gas central heating, living room, dining area, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Castle Close £595 pcm - Fees A newly modernised unfurnished semi detached house in a sought after location briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, fitted dining kitchen, new bathroom with shower. Benefits also include garage and driveway parking, rear garden. Cul-de-sac location. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Meres Road £575 pcm - Fees An unfurnished, modern style 3 bedroom semi detached house with front drive and additional rear garage, having double glazing, double doors to rear garden. Conservatory, cloakroom with w.c., front lounge, dining kitchen and space for table, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, paved rear garden. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, The Infield £550 pcm - Fees Stunning and modern on a well sought after new estate. This top floor apartment features 2 bedrooms, master with fitted wardrobes, large lounge with real oak wood flooring, superb high spec kitchen with built in fridge/freezer and washing machine, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. Not to be missed. EPC: C



NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf £550 pcm - Fees A very presentable, unfurnished 1st floor apartment on this popular development, overlooking the canal. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with fringe-freeze, double bedroom with en-suite, family bathroom with hair wash shower only, double glazing, electric heating, 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: B

HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street £525 pcm - Fees Set in this quiet residential area close to Blackheath Town Centre is this lovely modern mid-terraced home featuring lounge, fitted kitchen with gas oven/hob, 1 double & 1 large single bedroom, shower room, gas central heating, rear garden and parking for 2 cars, unfurnished. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street £525 pcm - Fees Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained and fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view this lovely light, airy apartment, modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms, this is a must see exceptional apartment. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Hope Street £500 pcm - Fees An unfurnished semi detached house in a popular residential area. This lovely house features 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, lounge, bathroom with shower. Benefits include gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden, driveway parking. Additional fees will apply. EPC: D

CRADLEY HEATH, Elbow Street £495 pcm - Fees A wonderfully unfurnished or part furnished to suit 2nd floor flat within walking distance to Old Hill shops and train station. This property comprises of a light and airy living room, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 double bedrooms, and bathroom with shower. Benefits include electric storage heating, communal gardens, allocated parking. EPC: TBC

CRADLEY HEATH, Coprice Road £485 pcm - Fees A 2 bedroom semi-detached house recently fully refurbished on the Timberrite Estate. This house comprises of a front reception room, spacious rear lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: C



OLDBURY, Arden Grove £475 pcm - Fees 1st floor modern apartment occupying the whole of the top floor. Within walking distance of Langley High St, train/bus links and J2 of the M5. This immaculate property features a spacious lounge, recently refitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, 1 double bedroom. Private garden and driveway parking. EPC: C

HALESOWEN, Richmond Court £450 pcm - Fees A modern furnished ground floor 1 bedroom flat set within a quiet location and close to shops and Halesowen Town Centre. This lovely apartment features a fitted kitchen, spacious living room, 1 bedroom, bathroom with shower, communal gardens. Available immediately. EPC: TBC

CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens £435 pcm - Fees A fantastic 1 bedroom 1st floor apartment which has just been fully refurbished to a high standard. Large dual aspect lounge, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, bathroom with shower, electric heating, allocated parking. This property is ready to go! EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Elbow Street £425 pcm - Fees An unfurnished ground floor apartment on a popular development, close to Old Hill High Street and the local Train Station. The property features; living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower. Benefits include electric storage heating, allocated parking space. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street £425 pcm - Fees An unfurnished maisonette which has been fully refurbished and is close to local shops and bus links. This lovely flat features electric storage heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, shower room, parking space. EPC: D

LYE, High Street £400 pcm - Fees Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This large and spacious 1st floor apartment has a lovely lounge with a feature bay window, 2 good size bedrooms, new bathroom suite but no shower, modern and contemporary kitchen with oven and hob, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. EPC: F

Property

Three-storey residence is packed with appeal



THE Firs, 355 Hagley Rod, Stourbridge is a detached three-storey property in a sought after location for sale through Andrew Grant at £479,950.

It has an entrance hall, living room, dining room, extended kitchen/diner, utility, walk-in pantry, ground-floor cloakroom, three first-floor bedrooms (master en-suite), bathroom, second floor bedroom with potential for a fifth bedroom/study, a double garage, driveway and rear gardens.

Contact Andrew Grant on 01384 370232 or www.andrew-grant.co.uk



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Lot 8:
136 CHESHIRE ROAD, SMETHWICK B67 6DN
Freehold 3 bed c/heated and double glazed villa needing modernisation.....£ circa 85,000

Lot 2:
101 CHESHIRE ROAD, SMETHWICK B67 6DW
Freehold 3 bedrommed c/heated and double glazed terraced needing improvement£ circa 75,000

Lot 9:
19 CHERRY TREE LANE, HALESOWEN B63 1DU
Freehold individual c/heated 3 bed detached£170-180,000

Lot 3:
18 WILLIAM ROAD, SMETHWICK B67 6LW
Freehold 3 bed semi in need of modernisation£ 95 - 100,000

Lot 4:
23 SOUTHWICK ROAD, HALESOWEN B62 9ET
Freehold centrally semi needing further improvement£90 - 95,000

Lot 10:
9 CLAREMONT ROAD, SMETHWICK B66 4JZ
Freehold 3 bedrommed c/heated and double glazed villa£100-110,000

Lot 5:
123 BOROUGH CRESCENT, OLDBURY B69 1BB
Freehold modern 7 bed c/heated and double glzd detached£155-160,000

Lot 11:
379 CITY ROAD, EDGBASTON B17 8LD
Freehold investment comprising 4 self-contained centrally heated flats£175-180,000

Lot 6:
22 HARVEST ROAD, SMETHWICK B67 6NQ
Freehold 2 bed centrally heated mid town house needing further improvement£ circa 75,000

Lot 12:
9 GAMESFIELD GREEN, WOLVERHAMPTON WV3 9RA
Freehold 3 bed c/heated detached needing renovation£110-120,000

Lot 7:
8 PORTLAND PLACE, 134/136 PORTLAND ROAD B16 9SS
Individual 2 bed c/heated and double glazed duplex garden apartment£ circa 85,000

Lot 13:
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Four bedroom semi detached property, comprising extended lounge/diner, breakfast room, kitchen, WC, family bathroom, drive and garage. Halesowen.

Timbertree Crescent, Cradley Heath



EPC D

£125,000

This is a very well presented three bedroom semi detached house offering the following accommodation. Halesowen.

Walmley Close, Halesowen



Awaiting EPC

OIEO £180,000

Modern detached house situated in a cul-de-sac on a popular residential estate. Lounge, conservatory, kitchen and three bedrooms. Halesowen.

Clancey Way, Halesowen



EPC C

Offers Over £190,000

Three storey townhouse comprising four bedrooms, three bathrooms and benefits from off road parking. Halesowen.

Witley Avenue, Halesowen



EPC D

£170,000

This is a modern detached house situated in an established residential area. Comprises lounge/diner, three bedrooms and bathroom. Halesowen.

Timbertree Crescent, Cradley Heath



EPC D

£125,000

This is a very well presented three bedroom semi detached house offering the following accommodation. Halesowen.

Green Lane, Halesowen



Awaiting EPC

£85,000

This traditional mid terraced property offers the following accommodation lounge, second reception room, three bedrooms and rear garden. Halesowen.

Apperley Way, Halesowen



Awaiting EPC

£70,000

This ground floor, one bedroom flat offers lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, bathroom, communal gardens and allocated parking. Halesowen.

Beech Road, Tividale



NEW

Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £140,000

A well maintained semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising, lounge, dining room, study, extended kitchen and family bathroom.

Denbigh Road, Tipton



NEW

Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £110,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, downstairs WC, family bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Hereford Road, Dudley



NEW

Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £100,000

Semi detached two bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, conservatory, downstairs WC, gardens and driveway.

Birmingham New Road, Tipton



NEW

EPC E

Offers Over £100,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, further reception room, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Fairview Road, Dudley



NEW

EPC D

Offers Over £100,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge/diner, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, parking and garage to rear.

Ivanhoe Street, Dudley



NEW

Awaiting EPC

£90,000

Mid terraced three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, downstairs WC, upstairs bathroom and rear garden.

Great Bridge Road, Bilston



EPC F

Offers Over £75,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, utility, bathroom, front and rear gardens and driveway.

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Drivetime

Your guide to the latest
motoring news and views



Would you Adam and Eve this?

The ADAM is Vauxhall's refreshingly different take on the small car sector.

The model title's is a nod to Adam Opel, the founder of Vauxhall's European sister company, but is unlikely to start a trend for Biblical car names. It may though, start a trend for buyer personalisation, the like of

which the market has never before seen. With over a million possible specification and trim combinations, the chances of two identical Vauxhall ADAMs ever being produced are statistically quite slim. Ground-breaking where it matters then - in the showroom. To disguise perhaps the fact that this car is actually quite conventional in arguably less important areas,

running on the underpinnings of Vauxhall's old third generation Corsa.

The dealer network won't mind. It's the stylish look and feel that will sell this model. True enough, the Griffin brand has brought us some stylish designs in the past, but they've only appealed to a small percentage of the car buying population. Now at last, we've a Vauxhall with widespread chic

appeal - a pretty new concept for British customers to grasp. Let's try it.

So what's it like behind the wheel? Slide into the seat and there's a very different feel from that provided by a Corsa.

As with all the powerplants launched with this car, it's a petrol unit, sixty two mph from rest occupying nearly 15s on the way to a top speed only just over 100mph.

Better by far to find only a little more for one of the 1.4s, an 87PS unit that manages 62mph in a far more acceptable 12.5s on the way to 109mph. And a 100PS engine that improves things further to 11.5s and 115mph. Ask for something a little more hi-tech and the designers will point to the three cylinder 1.0-litre petrol unit also developed for this car.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂. Zafira 1.6i 16v VVT (Manual5), Manual 5-speed: Urban 32.5 (8.7), Extra-urban 51.4 (5.5), Combined 42.2 (6.7). CO₂ emissions 157g/km.

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Drivetime



VW pumping up power

At the 1974 Geneva Motor Show, a sleek new Volkswagen hatchback coupe made its debut.

Forty years and over a million sales later, the Volkswagen Scirocco is preparing to return to Geneva, with a new range of advanced engines that offer up to 280 PS yet also promise fuel efficiency improvements of up to 19 per cent, without compromising the Scirocco's dynamic performance.

Externally, the Scirocco's stylish shape has been refined and modernised with new headlights and tail lights, as well as revised bumper styling.

The revised front bumper features aerodynamic 'blades' in the outer

section, like those of the latest-generation Golf GTI, with integrated indicator lights, daytime running lights and fog lights. On models fitted with the optional bi-xenon headlights, the daytime running lights are LEDs within the main headlights. At the rear, all Sciroccos now have LED tail lights, while the bumper has been reshaped to appear lower and more purposeful. As on a Golf, the Volkswagen logo badge now has an additional purpose: functioning as the tailgate release handle.

As before, the range-topping Scirocco R has a distinct look, with bespoke bumpers and alloy wheels. The Scirocco R now comes as standard with 18-inch 'Cadiz' alloy wheels, as on the Golf R. The rest of the range

also receives new alloy wheel designs, including the option of the 'Talladega' alloy previously reserved for the 'R'.

Under the bonnet (which as before features the Volkswagen roundel) are six new turbocharged direct-injection petrol and diesel engines, all of which meet EU6 emissions standards and return between 68.9 and 34.9 mpg.

Inside, the dashboard has been updated, with new-look dials and an auxiliary instrument cluster above the centre console, consisting of chronometer, charge pressure and oil temperature gauges – a tribute to the 1974 model.

Orders open in the UK in May, with first deliveries in September. More details available closer to launch.

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VW on the mark for SUV

By Graham Breeze

VOLKSWAGEN is relentless in its pursuit of a high ranking in the large SUV sector and the new Touareg R-Line is proof of the company's determination.

Based on the well-equipped Touareg Altitude, the Touareg R-Line adds luxurious extra equipment and unique R-Line styling in the battle to stand out in a crowded market.

Someone in the VW camp probably pointed out that it would be a useless exercise trying to emulate the off-road capabilities of Land Rover Discovery or Range Rover and instead said let's produce an up-market model that's more at home on the road.

Well they succeeded. Most models will never see a muddy track and while Touareg

doesn't excel off-road it's capable enough thanks to its high ground clearance and 4MOTION permanent four-wheel drive.

On the road Touareg has impressive comfort levels and refinement and sharp handling for such a huge car.

Sitting on 20-inch 'Tarragona' alloy wheels with 275/45 R20 tyres, the R-Line stands out because of distinctive front and rear bumpers and side skirts and distinctive badging on the front wings.

Standard bi-xenon headlights with dynamic curve lighting and LED daytime running lights give the R-Line driver a commanding view of the road, and are complemented by LED rear lights and number-plate lights.

The R-Line body kit also gives you front and rear bumper and side skirt styling and unique door sill protectors with the logo. Chrome twin tailpipes add a final touch.

Many rivals come with seven seats but Touareg is strictly for five people though



the long wheelbase means there's plenty of space wherever you're sitting. The entire rear bench can be moved back and forth to create the space where you need it most.

Folding the back seats down is a t' flick of a switch to increase luggage space from 123mpf in 7.6seconds, as well as combined fuel figures of 39.2mpg. But on the downside you sit in group 40E for insurance purpose and don't protect the planet much with CO₂ readings of 189g/km.

You will be safe in this model with ABS and EBD braking systems standard along with an intelligent ESP system. You get curtain air bags all round, a rollover protection system and to give you an extra feel of security there's an alarm, electronic immobiliser and child security locks.

The R-Line really competes when it comes to comfort levels. There's a superb touch screen

system incorporating SatNav and all the other electronic paraphernalia now associated with luxury travel such as Bluetooth and a multi-device interface. There's the now expected stop/start system as well as hill descent assist and the 4MOTION permanent four wheel drive system has limited slip differential and electronic differential lock on all four wheels meaning you can feel free to go off road if you want.

Would I buy the R-Line? Probably not because I found this Volkswagen just too big. Otherwise Volkswagen have got things just right for taking on the SUV market and will certainly reach their expected targets.



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Fuel consumption figures for CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD Manual in mpg (l/100km): Urban 31.7 (8.9), Extra Urban 45.6 (6.2), Combined 39.2 (7.7). CO₂ emissions: 168g/km; for Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in mpg (l/100km): Urban 42.2 (6.7), Extra Urban 60.1 (4.7), Combined 52.3 (5.4). CO₂ emissions: 129g/km; for Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S in mpg (l/100km): Urban 42.8 (6.6), Extra Urban 61.4 (4.6), Combined 53.3 (5.3). CO₂ emissions: 123g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Models Shown: CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD Manual in optional Passion Red Pearl at £22,495 On The Road; Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic at £16,995 On The Road; Jazz 1.2 S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic at £10,995 On The Road. **Terms and Conditions:** New retail CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD Manual registered from 2 January 2014 to 31 March 2014. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. **Honda Aspirations (PCP):** £269 per month example shown based on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD Manual in optional Passion Red Pearl at £22,495 total cash price including 5 year care package at £500 (and total amount payable) with 37 months 0% APR Representative (interest rate per annum 0% fixed) with £4,456.64 (19%) deposit. Guaranteed Future Value / Optional Final Payment of £8,854.53, annual mileage of 10,000 and excess mileage charge: 6p per mile. New retail Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S registered from 2 January 2014 to 31 March 2014. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. **Honda Aspiration (PCP):** £209 per month example shown based on Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic at £17,495 total cash price including 5 year care package at £500 (and total amount payable) with 37 months 0% APR Representative (interest rate per annum 0% fixed) with £3,812.69 (22%) deposit. Guaranteed Future Value / Optional Final Payment of £8,154.53, annual mileage of 10,000 and excess mileage charge: 5p per mile; New retail Jazz 1.2 S registered from 2 January 2014 to 31 March 2014. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. **Honda Aspiration (PCP):** £140 per month example shown based on Jazz 1.2 S in Milano Red Non-Metallic at £10,995 (and total amount payable) with 37 months 0% APR Representative (interest rate per annum 0% fixed) with £2,156.64 (16%) deposit. Guaranteed Future Value / Optional Final Payment of £5,159.22, annual mileage of 10,000 and excess mileage charge: 3p per mile. You must agree to pay the hire Purchase Price if you retain the vehicle at the end of the term. Total monthly payments £5,295.00. The vehicle is in good condition and has been serviced in accordance with the Honda service book and the maximum annual mileage has not been exceeded. Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over, subject to status. All figures are at time of publication but may be subject to change. Credit is provided by Honda Finance Europe Plc, 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL8 8QY. The 5 Year Care Package includes: **Servicing:** All scheduled servicing, as detailed in the vehicles service book, will be covered for 5 years or 62,500 miles, whichever comes first. **Warranty:** In addition to the standard 3 year warranty the customer will receive a complimentary 2 year extended guarantee taking the warranty to 5 years or 90,000 miles, whichever comes first. **Roadside Assist:** In addition to the standard 3 years roadside assistance package the customer will receive complimentary roadside assistance for a further 2 years, taking it to 5 years or 90,000 miles, whichever comes first. **The 5 Year Care Package:** The 5 Year Care Package is optional. It is being offered for £500 including VAT (usual value £1,545 including VAT) and is available to finance or non-finance customers. Please note, should you sell the vehicle during the period of cover, the package remains with the vehicle.

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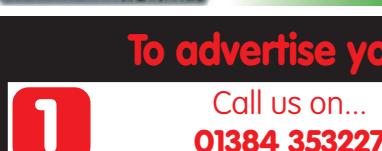
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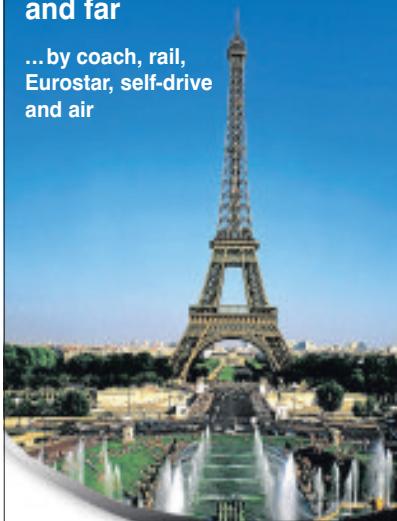
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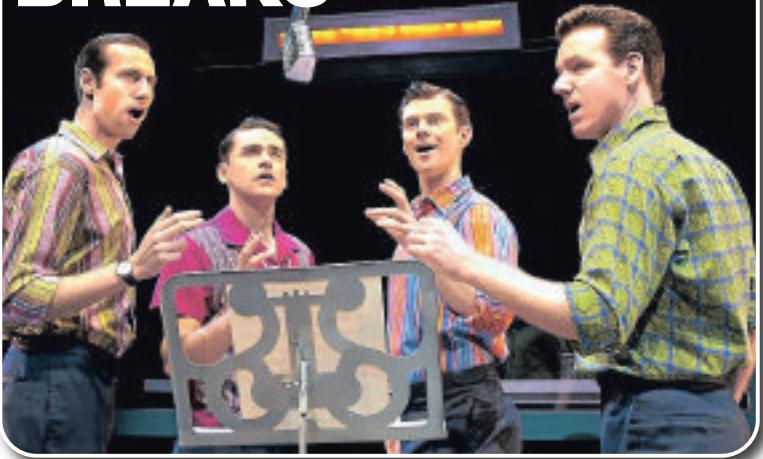
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Hales get runner-up position in round two

Worcester Winter League Round 2

ON Saturday A & B teams from Halesowen travelled to Redditch and Bromsgrove for the second round of the Worcester Winter League.

The A team had a tough opening but after a strong opening 10 events found themselves leading the gala by six points. However, it was clear by the halfway mark that the contest was going to be close with three teams in contention for the lead. With 10 events to go the team had slipped into second spot but despite a strong final finish Halesowen A were made to settle for the runner-up spot.

The B team were up against other A teams in their gala.

Halesowen swimmers battled hard and finished in a solid third place.

Point scores from Gala 1 (at Redditch): Stourbridge A 191, Halesowen A 189, Redditch A 188, Stourbridge B 116, Oldbury 108

Point scores from Gala 2 (at Bromsgrove): Worcester A 197, Pershore 160, Halesowen B 150, Redditch B 140, Haden Hill 133

Far afield run brings in medal

WITH most local races falling victim to the weather it was a quiet weekend for DK Running Club with anyone looking to be competitive having to venture further afield.

Those looking to pick up medals couldn't have picked a better location than Eton Dorney near Windsor, the site of the 2012 Olympic rowing events. DK's Samantha Hemming claimed a medal, completing the Garmin sponsored Race Your Pace Half Marathon in a new personal best of 2:9.14 as she builds up to crack at the London Marathon.

Jackie Burton headed to Barcelona to compete in their half marathon.

The warm weather and top quality field contributing to a finishing time of 2:20.03 for the 13.1 miles distance round the Catalan capital.

Old Hales are undone by penalties

BIRMINGHAM Medics 1sts 27

Old Halesians 2nds 19

Once again there was no first team game this week due to a waterlogged pitch. However, the seconds did manage to play.

Old Halesians Seconds took to the field for the first time in several weeks to take on a Medics team who are unbeaten this season.

The home side dominated the early part of the game and they added a penalty and an unconverted try to take an 8-0 lead.

Penalties would eventually prove to be the downfall of a Hale-

sown team who managed to score more tries than their opponents.

Old Hales got back into the game and on occasions pressurised the Medics defence to keep them on their toes.

However, the home side made regular forays into the Old Hales 22 metre zone and were awarded several kickable penalties that their fullback slotted between the posts.

Three added penalty goals made the half time score 17-0 to the Medics.

Old Hales' half-time team talk seemed to do the trick as they

Rugby

came out for the second half with all guns blazing.

The Old Hales scrum regularly drove the opposition back and gave a good platform for powerful attacks.

Good interplay from the forwards gave Tom Dempsey the opportunity to crash through the Medics' defence to score close to the posts and his team mate Tom Harris duly added the conversion.

From the kick off Old Hales made their way down the field

again and from another driving scrum the ball was quickly moved to the left to allow Andy Tromans to score from the left wing to make the score 17-12.

Unforced errors by Old Hales allowed the Medics more possession and once again they were awarded a penalty close to the posts which they slotted over to add to their tally.

With 10 minutes remaining Old Hales forced a lineout in the Medics 22.

A fine catch and drive by the forwards culminated in hooker, Sam Jones, scoring a try from the back

of the maul for their efforts.

Tom Harris added the extras to make the score 20-19.

The last frantic minutes of the game saw both teams attacking moves ending in errors.

Finally, however, the Medics made the most of some clean ball and managed to score a converted try to make the final score 27-19.

Old Hales can reflect on a game where they outscored the opposition three tries to two but gave away too many penalties and this gave the Medics 15 simple points through penalty kicks that changed the outcome of the game.

Envile get to ring in a victory over Bel

ENVILLE A (115-5) beat Belbroughton (64 all out) by 51 runs

Envile's openers Matt Branch (35) and Jono Edwards (36no) laid a strong foundation for this victory.

On their retirements Envile lost two quick wickets and the run-rate was radically reduced.

Perry for Belbroughton with 2-11 from his three overs was largely responsible for this reverse.

After a short partnership between Tom Bingham and Ben Shorter was dissolved Matt Branch returned but unable to see much of the strike managed to get himself out.

Jono Howells then returned and saw Envile past the 100 mark to set Belbroughton a reasonable target.

They were however, soon in trouble and were reduced to 36-3. The chase became impossible with Envile showing great focus and inspiration.

Oldswinford (109-5) beat Swindon (94-5) by 15 runs

In spite of the early loss of Lee Nightingale, Harry Stanier (21) and Dan Attwood (25) pulled the innings together well until their retirements.

Saxons on top after a shutout

STOURBRIDGE Saxons 38 Leicester Lions 0

With Darlington Mowden Park's game at Sheffield lost to the weather Stourbridge now sit top of National League 2 North after Saturday's shut out of a determined Leicester Lions.

The Saxons now enjoy a well-deserved week's rest, returning to action on March 1st with a crunch fixture at Macclesfield.

First to score was flanker Nigel Mukarati at the base of a lineout catch and drive the visitors couldn't hold out.

The Saxons recovered kicked a scrum penalty back into the corners from where Mike Hill crashed over out wide for his second try in successive weeks.

Nathan Bressington scored next.

Drew Harper grabbed the bonus point try and Bressington crossed for his second try.

Spirit of DK remains high despite losing

Dudley Kingswinford 3 Macclesfield 26

IF spirit was the key ingredient on which a league's success was based, then this DK team would be top of the league.

This was one of their best performances of the season to date, where they held potential promotions candidates Macclesfield to a close 26-3 defeat, restricting high scoring visitors to just four tries.

This, despite playing for almost an hour with 14 men when young flanker Danny Hawkins was red-carded.

Playing with a strong wind at their backs, DK looked to attack at every opportunity, but were caught out when a good attacking move broke down and the visitors launched a counter attack, and No.8 Ryan Parkinson finished the move and crossed wide our for an unconverted try.

Further pressure from the Macclesfield pack shortly after led to the award of a penalty try as DK were penalised for bringing down a driving maul, and the referee did not hesitate to go between the posts. The try was converted by fly half Tom Eaton.

DK then launched their own attacks but were unable to breach a solid defence and their only award was a solitary penalty from fly half Gareth Bown. Shortly afterwards the sending off only served to galvanize the home side. And at some stages it was hard to realise which of the two teams was playing with 14 men.

Rugby

Just on half time, DK were struck a cruel blow when Macclesfield were awarded their third try through high-scoring wing Ed Stobart. The try was converted by Tom Eaton.

With the wind advantage in the favour of the visitors the signs for the home side were ominous but those odds did not faze DK and they opened the half strongly. One such attack saw fly half Bown make a good break only to be hauled down a few yards short of the lines. DK continued to press but couldn't find a way through.

The man advantage began to show as the visitors regrouped and launched attack after attack but the blue line across the pitch stood solid. There were short periods of respite for the home side but Macclesfield continued to turn the screw. Eventually a stretched defence was breached and that man Stobart rounded the defence to bag his second with Eaton added the extras. To hold a team of Macclesfield's calibre to just

III wind blows some good for Harry's hole in one



Golf Academy Director and England golf coach Rob Black presents Harry with his certificate for hitting a hole in one

A YOUNG Dudley golfer has achieved every players dream of a hole in one at a course near Wolverhampton.

Ten-year-old golfer Harry Watton from Upper Gornal achieved the impressive feat at the 3 Hammers Golf Complex in Coven. The young golfer,

who attends Roberts Primary School, Lower Gornal did it with the first shot from tee on Saturday during the strong winds which hit the region.

Harry regularly visits the Complex for golf lessons, to use driving range for practice and to play their 18 hole golf course. The youngster has been

playing golf for 12 months and for the last six months has progressed to the Staffordshire County Academy Programme.

The aspiring champion wants to follow in the footsteps of his idols Rory McIlroy and Justin Rose. Harry's parents Dave and Natalie said: "We're very proud of him."

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Perry is aiming for good season

FANS favourite Tom Perry celebrates his 21st birthday this weekend - and the Cradley man hopes to be celebrating success throughout 2014.

Perry is back with the Heathens, who will again race home meetings at Wolverhampton, after he spent last season on loan to the Isle of Wight.

And he said: "It's great to be back and I can't wait to get started with the Cradley boys."

"It's a milestone birthday for me this week and I hope I can celebrate throughout the season with plenty of success for Cradley."

"The bikes are coming along nicely, it's all part of the preparation for the new season and it's going to be a big season for me both on and off the track."

"I'm looking forward to the challenge because a few things went wrong for me last year and now is my chance to put it right."

Perry says the Heathens management have again got it right with their team selection.

He added: "At Cradley our team is looking pretty strong for the new season."

"There's a good mix of experienced riders who you know will score points, some young riders who could prove really good signings and a few guys on bargain averages. The side looks to have a pretty good balance."

Clarke wins latest round

STOURBRIDGE racer Steven Clarke showed the rest a clean pair of wheels as he won the latest Arenacross UK round in Newcastle.

The 23-year-old, pipped Frenchman Cyrille Coulon in the main event after a frenetic night of racing at the city's Metro Radio Arena last Saturday.

Series leader Fabien Izard came home third, with Clarke rising to fourth in the overall standings thanks to his win, ahead of the next round of the series in Sheffield this weekend.

Victory continued a roller-coaster year for Clarke, who won the first round in Bellfast but failed to make the final in the previous round in Liverpool, even though he finished the race off the bike after being forced to jump off right at the finish. "That's got to be one of the hardest races of my career," said Clarke.

Hales hockey suffer their sixth loss this season

Stone 6 OHHC 1sts 1

OLD Halesomians Hockey Club lost for the sixth time this season, as they fell to an upcoming and much-improved Stone side, who have lost just once since the Christmas break.

The rain fell heavily prior to pushback, and there was a lot of surface water on the Stone pitch as the game began.

Stone dominated the early exchanges, as their game-plan was heavily effective against the visitors.

Hales struggled to contain the counter-attack of Stone, who were much stronger in all areas of the pitch.

Hockey

Stone opened the scoring, and they soon doubled their lead following a mistake from returning goalkeeper Steven Charlton.

Hales were dejected, but fought back to create a few chances of their own. They were unable to convert these chances into goals, and Stone soon hit with a counter-attack which tore the Hales defence in two.

Stone hit again before the break, and Hales faced a massive challenge in the second half as they found themselves 4-0 down.

Hales were much improved in the second

half, but were far from their best. Hales had a few penalty corners which they were either blocked by the Stone defence who were solid all afternoon, or dashed wide of the goal.

Stone grabbed a 5th goal and put the game beyond the reach of the travelling and wet Hales players.

Stone continued to hit Hales hard, and scored once again to make it six, before Hales grabbed a consolation when Ben Hughes found space on the right, where his ball across the D was helped on by Paul Woodall, to Graham Knight at the back post who could not miss from close range.

Old Hales will look upon this week as a 'bad day at the office', and they must improve significantly to ensure they finish as high as possible in the league.

Despite the loss, Hales were able to hold onto their fourth placed spot, and they host South Nottingham, who are fighting for survival, next week, 1.30pm start at Ormiston Forge Academy.

Other Results:
Stourport 2 OHHC Ladies 1sts 1
OHHC 2nds 2 Old Silhillians 1
Stourport 5 OHHC 3rds 0
OHHC 4ths 3 Olton & West Warwick 2



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Yeltz in goalless contest

Goole 0 Halesowen 0

BOTH teams deserved a point after producing an entertaining game in difficult, windy weather.

There were chances, and Halesowen showed first when Elliot Turner found himself clear on 19 minutes but shot wide. Goole forced a series of free-kicks in the first half but both defences were on top in the wind.

Four minutes after half-time the visitor's top scorer, Ben Hassey, got clear but shot wide.

Turner brought out an excellent save from Goole goalkeeper Liam Flynn on 52 minutes as the home team's main threats again came from corners and free-kicks. A minute from time Halesowen thought they had won it when Asa Charlton sent in a free-kick and Flynn and Joe Hull jumped for it, the ball ending up in the net. But the referee ruled there had been a foul on the goalkeeper.

In injury time Goole could have nicked all three points but Halesowen goalkeeper Matt Sergeant turned a 30-yard shot from Matt Husbands wide.

Halesowen are now second in Evo-Stik Division One South.

Woffy wins the man of the year

WOLVERHAMPTON speedway ace Tai Woffinden left a host of motorcycling icons trailing as he blitzed to the Motorcycle News Man of the Year Award for 2013.

The 23-year-old was up against a galaxy of two-wheeled stars from the road racing world, but bagged twice the number of votes notched by any of the other 13 shortlisted riders.

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YELTZ SHOT DOWN BY THE BIG GUNS

Halesowen 0 West Brom 6

HALESOWEN Ladies, only in their second season as a team, faced up to West Bromwich Albion Ladies in the quarter finals of the county cup.

Ironically the last time Halesowen lost a game was against West Brom in the same stage of last season.

Football

coming back to do some defending in the Yeltz goal.

West Brom are six divisions above the home side.

However Halesowen started well and defended well against strong wingers and a strong midfield and began the match by holding their own.

Busiest

Hannah Tromans was the busiest of the keepers making some fantastic saves. However, Albion didn't get everything their own way and striker Rachel Letford could have scored for the home side.

Albion opened by scoring off a corner as it came across and within the scramble of trying to clear the ball found its way into the net.

The visiting team then soon made it two with a well-taken low shot late on in the first half of the match which looked like it was already slipping away from the home side squad.

After half time with nothing to lose the Yeltz came close to scoring on several occasions.

The Halesowen midfield of Dani Reade, Sarah Hamill and Tracey Haycock were instrumental in the Halesowen attacks and in

keeping up the pressure but the Albion were always dangerous and ready with the counter-attack which produced more outstanding goalkeeping from Tromans who worked hard to keep the score at just two for some time.

Manager Scott McKee decided it was time for a change and reshuffled the formation of the squad to a 4-4-2 to try to sneak a goal from the stronger Albion side.

McKee said after the match: "I'm proud of the Yeltz squad we competed for much of the game but fitness took its toll on our squad and I wish the Albion luck in the Semi finals.

"It was always going to be a uphill struggle but we gave it our best shot, maybe next season."



Halesowen's Rachel Letford goes for goal in the match against West Brom which ended in defeat

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